

## *Caribbean Challenge Initiative*

**Government leadership to safeguard the Insular Caribbean's  
marine and coastal environment for future generations**

**Antigua & Barbuda**



**The Bahamas**



**Grenada**



**St. Lucia**



**St. Kitts & Nevis**



**Dominican Republic**



**Jamaica**



**St. Vincent & the Grenadines**



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The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and UNEP's Caribbean Environment Program (UNEP-CEP) are pleased to introduce a new joint quarterly update covering the ***Caribbean Challenge initiative***—a **government-led effort currently involving eight Insular Caribbean governments (CC8) who have committed to establish, by 2020, comprehensive and effective national systems of marine and coastal protected areas that cover at least 20% of their near-shore marine / coastal environment.** To achieve this commitment, governments and partners are focusing on developing financial mechanisms (trust funds) and training marine protected areas (MPA) staff at regional and national levels. To date, participating governments in the *Caribbean Challenge* include: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These eight Caribbean countries have demonstrated both leadership in conservation as well as a commitment to advancing a green economy. It is hoped that other countries and territories of the Caribbean will be inspired to join the *Caribbean Challenge* to achieve a truly regional initiative.

This update is being widely circulated to Caribbean governments, donor and UN agencies, marine managers, NGOs and others in the Caribbean and globally, in order to increase awareness, share progress and inspire others. Below is a summary of key developments during Phase I of the *Caribbean Challenge*, and a look ahead at Phase II.



Photo taken after *Caribbean Challenge* launch at CBD COP-8 meeting (Germany), showing officials from four of the initial participating countries: Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Bahamas, and Dominican Republic.

### Phase I of the Caribbean Challenge initiative

The *Caribbean Challenge* was officially launched in 2008 during a high-level event in Bonn, Germany sponsored by the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and the government of The Bahamas. Prior to the launch, environment ministers of member countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) endorsed the *Caribbean Challenge*. Later, the *Caribbean Challenge* was formally endorsed by Caribbean heads of state in a CARICOM Leaders Meeting in 2009, in the *Iliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development*.

Phase I of the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative has entailed a wide range of start-up activities, such as:

- Developing **master plans** for protected area systems
- Declaring **50 new protected areas** and early efforts to **improve protected area management**
- Awarding **over US \$20 million in grants** for on-the-ground activities
- Developing **sustainable finance mechanisms**
- **Capacity building and technical assistance** to strengthen marine / coastal protected areas (e.g. training activities in MPA management)

Initial support for these activities is being provided by: Global Environment Facility (GEF) (four full-sized projects aligned with the *Caribbean Challenge* were approved); German KfW; TNC; UN Development Program (UNDP); UNEP-CEP (through the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum - CaMPAM); and the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### 1. Protected Area System Master Plans

Master plans detailing the key actions to achieve effective national systems of protected areas are under development in each country involved in the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative, with the exception of The Bahamas which has already completed their master plan. Master plans identify new areas that require protection, and define additional funding, training, capacity building, policy actions, and other steps needed to effectively manage / expand the protected area system.



The Bahamas completed a Master Plan for its National Protected Areas System in 2008.

## 2. New Protected Area Decrees

Since the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative was launched, **participating governments, with partner support, have declared almost 50 new protected areas** (including three in The Bahamas, four in Grenada, eight in Jamaica, and over 30 in the Dominican Republic).

## 3. Grant awards

US \$20M in GEF grants. A total of **US \$20 million in grants has been awarded by the GEF to implement four projects** in The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and in five Eastern Caribbean countries. These projects have all been designed specifically to support the implementation of the *Caribbean Challenge*.

UNEP medium-sized project grants. In March 2011, UNEP-CEP (through CaMPAM and in collaboration with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute - GCFI), launched a **special edition of their grant fund for medium-sized projects (up to US \$45,000) in support of the Caribbean Challenge and to promote sustainable marine resource management.** The grants are funded by the Directorate General of International Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were made available to the eight countries participating in the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative. The CaMPAM Team provided technical assistance to each country in the design of their projects and the development of proposals. The projects funded through these grants are:

- “Building infrastructure and development of a framework for the management of marine protected areas in St. Kitts and Nevis” (Department of Physical Planning and Environment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development)
- “Strengthening the management of the MPA network in Antigua and Barbuda” (Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and Environment)
- “Standardization and optimization of existing marine protected areas in the Dominican Republic, focused on increasing effectiveness of management” (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and Reef Check Dominican Republic)
- “Supporting the development of an effective national MPA structure in Grenada: From training MPA wardens, managers, and board members, to raising community awareness and developing alternative livelihood skills” (Ministry of Agriculture / Grenada Fund for Conservation)
- “Development and effective management of marine protected areas in the Abacos” (Bahamas National Trust)
- “Training teachers to increase student awareness and understanding of the importance of marine protected areas” (St. Lucia National Trust)
- “Training in the installation and maintenance of mooring buoys in the Palisadoes-Port Royal Protected Area to increase management effectiveness” (National Environment and Planning Agency, Jamaica)
- “Marine park planning for the proposed South Coast Marine Park” (Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries, St. Vincent and the Grenadines)

Other funding opportunities. Other funding opportunities to support the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative (e.g. through US and European agencies) are currently being explored. **A Financing Roundtable on the Caribbean Challenge is scheduled for October 21, 2011 in Grenada,** hosted by the government of Grenada, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), with support from TNC (see Upcoming Events below).

#### 4. Sustainable Finance Mechanisms

A new financial architecture is being developed, as part of the *Caribbean Challenge*, to provide reliable, long-term, sustainable funding for protected area systems for both marine *and terrestrial* protected areas. This financial architecture involves a set of regional and national trust funds which will help ensure the success of existing and newly established protected areas.

Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. The centerpiece of the new financial architecture is the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), which will be a large-scale, independent, regional fund. Solid progress has been made on developing the legal documents needed to establish the CBF. Governments have reviewed and provided substantive inputs on these documents. The CBF is expected to be legally established as a tax-exempt charity in the UK in September 2011, and a Caribbean-based office will be set up later this year.

**In Phase I of the *Caribbean Challenge*, the CBF will be capitalized with a US \$40 million endowment. Already, US \$32 million has been committed by the Government of Germany (KfW), the GEF, and TNC. The endowment is expected to grow over time, and other types of endowment and non-endowment sub-funds (e.g. sinking funds) will be established under the CBF. Over time, the size of the CBF is expected to grow substantially (potentially to US \$100 plus million). The endowment will be invested in a conservative portfolio of stocks and bonds, and will generate annual investment returns.**

National Protected Area Trust Funds. **CBF investment returns will be channeled annually, according to an agreed formula, to independent national protected area trust funds (NPATFs) in the eight eligible countries.** Each NPATF will have a Board with government and non-governmental representatives (majority non-governmental) that will decide which projects receive grants. NPATFs will be eligible to request CBF funding starting in late 2012. Starting in the *third* year of accessing funding, NPATFs will need a 1:1 match from sustainable financing sources (e.g. tourism-related fees or contributions) in order to receive CBF funding.

Work is already underway in a number of countries to establish NPATFs. A major focus of the GEF grants

referenced above is to support establishing these national trust funds and associated sustainable financing mechanisms. In some countries, existing trust funds can serve as the NPATF; in others, new institutions will need to be established.

Experience with independent trust funds around the world shows that they become *magnets* for attracting other sources of funding (e.g. from governments or corporate donors). Once the NPATFs are established, local fund mobilization efforts will begin.

With capital from the CBF, the new sustainable financing mechanisms that will be put in place, and other funding sources, NPATFs will make grants each year to both NGOs and government agencies for on-the-ground projects that support the countries' national systems of protected areas. Over time, NPATFs could potentially support other conservation-related activities as well. *Territories* participating in the *Caribbean Challenge* in the future are expected to establish / utilize similar trust funds.

Sustainable Finance Workshops. In the coming months, with funding from UNEP-CEP, the Italian government, and other sources, TNC will organize workshops and follow-up activities to support efforts to establish NPATFs and sustainable financing mechanisms. Already, one sustainable finance workshop for *Caribbean Challenge* governments was held in November 2010 in the Dominican Republic (photo below), supported by USAID and the MacArthur Foundation (for more information, contact Rob Weary at [rweary@tnc.org](mailto:rweary@tnc.org)).



Workshop under the *Caribbean Challenge* on sustainable financing, held in the Dominican Republic in November 2010.

## 5. Training of Trainers (ToT)

**In September 2011, 20 marine protected area (MPA) managers and marine resource professionals from seven Caribbean countries**—The Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada—**will travel to Ambergris Caye in Belize to attend an annual regional Training of Trainers (ToT) course on MPA management, organized by CaMPAM.** The course is also part of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) sub-program's activities for strengthening MPA capacity in the wider Caribbean. It is funded by the Directorate General of International Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additional support is being provided by the Belize Fisheries Department, Protected Areas Conservation Trust, and the Hol Chan Marine Reserve.

The ToT course is designed to strengthen fundamental MPA management competencies through lectures on a broad array of topics, interactive exercises, and peer-to-peer learning and evaluation that will allow students to both understand the subject matter and begin building the foundation for mentoring, professional coaching and ongoing peer exchange. Moreover, several Belizean resource managers will present management strategies and lessons from Belize's extensive MPA network.

The 2011 course is expected to create a cadre of leaders who, upon graduation, will launch and sustain a peer exchange network, spread institutional knowledge, and replicate effective MPA management models among Caribbean countries. For more information on the ToT course, please contact Georgina Bustamante at [gbustamante@gcfi.org](mailto:gbustamante@gcfi.org). Further information on UNEP-CEP's SPAW program and CaMPAM activities can be found at the following two web sites: <http://www.cep.unep.org/cartagena-convention/spawprotocol>; <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>

## 6. CaMPAM Communications

A wealth of information related to marine resources conservation, MPA management and specific events at MPAs in the Caribbean region has been disseminated through CaMPAM's Email List. Some 500 MPA practitioners around the Caribbean and in other parts of the world are now subscribed to this List. The List also helps disseminate relevant information such as news, events, and updates as well as address questions from practitioners involved in protected areas and the

advancement of the *Caribbean Challenge* vision. Information is disseminated from members as well as other sources, such as the Coral List, WCPA-Marine, GLISPA-Discuss and GCFI Net. MPA practitioners have also received individual assistance from the CaMPAM Team on various aspects of MPA research, planning and management.

## 7. Coordination Meetings of Governments

Informal coordination meetings involving governments participating in the *Caribbean Challenge* have been held over the past two years. The next meeting is being jointly organized by UNEP-CEP, CaMPAM and TNC and will be held on November 4 in Mexico, during the annual meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (for more information, please contact Georgina Bustamante or go to the following web site: <http://www.gcfi.org/Conferences/64th/Mexico.html>).

The coordination meeting will update government representatives and partners about the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative and enable them to share information on project activities, as well as to learn about the latest progress in marine conservation and fisheries science and practice, and to network among themselves and with more than 200 marine scientists and managers attending the GCFI meeting. Going forward, participating governments may decide to organize more formal, regular meetings to coordinate efforts under the *Caribbean Challenge*.



## Phase II of the *Caribbean Challenge* initiative

Site level. Over the coming months, the *Caribbean Challenge* will transition to a second phase. At the site level, in each of the countries, work is progressing on the declaration of new protected areas, the development of management plans and the establishment of effective

management programs that address major threats (including climate change) and generate benefits for local stakeholders.

National level. At the national level, drawing on GEF and other financing sources, governments and partners will focus on five linked priorities:

- To complete Protected Area Master Plans
- To establish and capitalize national protected area trust funds (NPATFs)
- To create new sustainable financing mechanisms (e.g. tourism-based fees and debt-for-nature swaps)
- To advance legal and policy actions
- To develop and implement ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change

Regional level. At the regional level, the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund will be a high priority in Phase II. Over the next year, the CBF will become operational. CBF funding could start to flow in late 2012. Efforts to mobilize additional CBF contributions will continue.

In addition, Phase II provides opportunities for more significant progress, and potentially new directions. In discussions with CC8 governments and other partners about a Phase II vision, several ideas have emerged: (i) a high-level event in 2012 involving political and business leaders; (ii) one or more government-led steering mechanisms for the *Caribbean Challenge*; (iii) strategies for generating additional funding (e.g. “debt-for-climate adaptation” swaps, new government and private sector contributions to the CBF and NPATFs); and (iv) expanding the scope of the *Caribbean Challenge* in two ways: expanding the programmatic scope beyond marine / coastal protected areas (to cover other key issues, such as sustainable coastal tourism), and expanding the membership of the *Caribbean Challenge* to include other countries and territories.

## Caribbean Challenge: International Context

The *Caribbean Challenge* Initiative is one of a series of global island commitments (based on high-level leadership) to have been made by governments at major international events, following announcements in 2006 of the *Micronesia Challenge*, the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (Kiribati) and a range of other national commitments by island countries and countries that have islands. Two developing “challenges”—one in West

Africa and the other in the Western Indian Ocean—are also based on this model.

## Upcoming Events

October: **NBSAP workshop for Caribbean governments in Grenada** (October 17-20, 2011), hosted by the Grenada government and CBD Secretariat (contact: Aria St. Louis; [ariajohnson1@gmail.com](mailto:ariajohnson1@gmail.com))

October: **Financing Roundtable on Caribbean Challenge in Grenada** (October 21, 2011), hosted by government of Grenada, CBD Secretariat, and GLISPA (contact: Timothy Antoine; [timothyantoine@gmail.com](mailto:timothyantoine@gmail.com))

October 30 - November 4, 2011: **GCFI Annual Meeting and Caribbean Challenge Update Meeting (Nov. 4) in Mexico**, hosted by CaMPAM and TNC (contact: Georgina Bustamante; [gbustamante@gcfi.org](mailto:gbustamante@gcfi.org))

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