



# Sustaining Partnerships: a conference on conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities

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## Conference conclusions and recommendations

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### B. Introduction

It has been recognised, not least by the sponsors, that the value of conferences such as this is in open discussion and providing some clear conclusions and recommendations. Here those recommendations and conclusions are presented. They are based on a draft circulated in advance and then modified by subsequent discussion sessions (see Annex 1 for more information on the process).

In order to minimise any constraints, a common structure was not imposed on developing discussion points and draft conclusions and recommendations prior to the workshops. However, subsequent to the drafting, some formatting and numbering were added to aid reference in subsequent discussions. The session coordinators and the conference organisers used the discussions from the conference, written inputs and comments on a final draft circulated to conference participants to amend and extend the draft conclusions and recommendations.

It is important to note that not all conclusions and recommendations will apply to every territory. They all differ and any kind of “one-size-fits-all” approach would be unlikely to be successful.

The Conference was extraordinarily valuable to UKOTCF itself and the Forum will clearly take note of the recommendations addressed to it. The wider value of the Conference is witnessed by the presence of Territories' Ministers (or their equivalents from territories with non-ministerial systems), their statements and offers of future hosting and resourcing.

The conclusions and recommendations have been grouped into sections, some fairly closely related to the conference sessions, but others cutting across several. The categories of organisations to which recommendations are directed are indicated in bold italics in the text or after it. The session(s) in which the conclusion or recommendation arose is indicated by the session number(s), as indicated in the programme.

The following document is the full version. We shall produce from this smaller documents tailored to individual audiences.

It is clearly not possible for one conference to address all matters, nor to come to perfect conclusions and recommendations. However, it is hoped, indeed anticipated, that that they will be of practical use.

## C. Environmental Education and Awareness

### **C1. Requirements of CBD and other MEAs, and influencing decision makers**

#### **Conclusions**

001. Environmental Education is one of the most important elements of environmental protection and management. (13)
002. CBD and other MEAs (including the Environment Charters) have very clear statements and targets for environmental education for all aspects of civil society and governments (for example, CBD's Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) programme, which supports CBD article 13 and Aichi Target 1). (13)
003. Key threats to island biodiversity have been identified as:
  - Lack of public awareness of biodiversity concerns
  - Lack of political understanding, interest and support for conservation and wildlife issues; this relates directly to political actions for sustainable development. (13)
004. Some UKOTs/CDs already have Sustainable Development Plans with education as one of the highest priorities (e.g. Tristan da Cunha). (13)

#### **Recommendations**

In accordance with the UK Environmental Charters Article no. 8 and CBD Article 13, the following recommendations are being put forward.

005. Sustainable Development Plans (or their equivalents) should include environmental education and public awareness. (To: **UKOT/CD Governments**) (13)
006. Government Ministers and senior officials throughout the UKOTs/CDs should receive regular briefings from ecologists with local knowledge about issues relating to the Environment Charters and their commitments, the importance of their local biodiversity, and specifically threats to local ecosystems, international and globally important species and populations (e.g. endemic species). (To: **UKOT/CD Governments, including Departments of Environment**) (13)
007. Government Departments and agencies with responsibility for the environment should be adequately funded by territory governments. (To: **UKOT/CD Governments**) (13)
008. Actions of NGOs which deliver important conservation work should be supported by governments. Partnerships, either informal or via Memoranda of Understanding or Co-operation are effective, both for cash-strapped NGOs and Government Environment Departments. (To: **UKOT/CD Governments and NGOs**) (13)
009. **UKOT/CD Governments** need to arrange for providing training for teachers and developing teachers' education materials (e.g. resource guides on various topics including biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, climate change and renewable energy). (13)

## **C2. Resources and funding opportunities**

### **Conclusions**

010. Despite specific requirements and targets for environmental education and public awareness (e.g. CBD Article 13 and Aichi target 1), there are very limited funding opportunities for this, for example CEPA programmes are specifically not eligible for funding from the Darwin Plus programme. Funding to Education Departments and NGOs promoting Environmental Education and Awareness is critical and should be given priority. (13)
011. Territory government departments with responsibility for the environment often have an education officer (or support one in an environmental NGO), and undertake school visits. This is a valuable role, but needs adequate resourcing. (13)
012. NGOs play an extremely important role in public awareness raising and environmental education, but have limited and often unpredictable funds for this work. NGOs are normally very effective with their limited resources, frequently relying on a lot of volunteer effort. However, some hard cash is needed to support their CEPA programmes. (13)

### **Recommendations**

013. ***UK Government*** should end urgently its 5-year block on grant-funding for environmental education and awareness for the UKOTs. (We recognise that consultants are expensive, but NGOs, like UKOTCF doing this work with local partners, are good value for money.) (To: ***UK Government***) (13)
014. ***Territory Governments*** should set up and manage, jointly with local NGOs, a dedicated Conservation Fund (e.g. through tourist landing fees) to which NGOs can apply. (To: ***UKOT/CD Governments***) (13)

## **C3. Schools Curricula**

### **Conclusions**

015. Much good quality and attractive environmental teaching material is produced and available. However, much of this is not used effectively, mainly because the statutory programmes of study need all of the teaching time available. Therefore material needs to be designed to be integrated with the curriculum. Materials in electronic form offer greater flexibility than paper-based materials, are more economic, and can be updated more readily. (13)
016. It is often unclear how territory education departments and people producing environmental education materials liaise. Involvement of local teachers in the development of environmental education materials is effective. (13)
017. Children have a great interest and curiosity in their environment, and are often the most receptive to new or life-changing ideas. Simple children's activities can cover a surprising range of facets of environmental work. (13)
018. Sustainable development education offers opportunities for locally-based environmental education. (13)

### **Recommendations**

019. Attempts should be made to integrate Environmental Education topics into the National Curricula at all levels. Environmental Education materials need to be curriculum-linked, and included in the assessment process. Consider introducing a certificate of achievement which recognises student achievements and can assist with job applications. (To: ***UKOT/CD Government Departments of Education and of Environment, NGOs and project designers and managers***) (13)
020. Investigate linking a locally assessed environmental certificate of achievement to more widely recognised qualifications. (To: ***UKOT/CD Government Departments of Education and examination boards***) (13)
021. Classroom-based activities need to be supported by hands-on involvement and investigation, including outdoor classrooms and field-trips. (To: ***UKOT/CD Government Departments of Education and of the Environment, project designers and managers, NGOs***) (13)

022. There should be clear methods of communication between education departments, and those people producing environmental education materials for schools and colleges. Local educators and teachers should be involved in the development of environmental education materials. (To: *UKOT/CD Government Departments of Education and of the Environment, project designers and managers, NGOs*) (13)
023. It is important that environmental education activities are included in schools' programmes from the start. (To: *UKOT/CD Government Departments of Education*) (13)

#### **C4. Using broadcast media, social networking and multi-media apps (games)**

##### **Conclusions**

024. TV, radio, and social networks are very effective at reaching a wide public audience. Multi-media apps (e.g. for smart-phones, tablets) could be a very effective tool for engaging and informing the wider public, especially young people. (13)
025. Social networking is effective at reaching a wide audience, and engaging interest. Effective public engagement and understanding is essential in conservation, especially for small organisations with limited resources. (13)

##### **Recommendations**

026. Opportunities for using TV, radio, social networking and the development of Apps should be considered when planning future environmental education and public awareness programmes. (To: *NGOs, project designers and managers, UKOT/CD Government departments*) (13)
027. Share what is going on in UKOTs/CDs using the Forum Website or Facebook page and other media (as stated in UK's Commitment 6 in the Environment Charter). (To: *NGOs, project designers and managers, UKOT/CD Government departments*) (13)

#### **C5. Other public awareness raising actions (including field trips, outdoor classrooms, exhibitions and open days)**

##### **Conclusions**

028. Environmental initiatives are often best tackled at the grass-roots level. (13)
029. Environmental camps, competitions, etc. are a great way to engage young people (and their parents).
030. Outdoor classrooms and exhibitions, with guiding possibilities and interpretive signage, provide an attractive opportunity to engage and inform the wider public. (13)
031. Volunteers can deliver effective and low cost conservation work, and are good for raising public awareness. (13)
032. Creating partnerships is a key way in which under-resourced NGOs can deliver their public awareness and education programmes. This includes establishing NGO/government partnerships.
033. Effective communication with all stakeholders is a key feature of success. (13)

##### **Recommendations**

034. Identify opportunities for open days, outdoor classrooms and activities, and timetable these into the work programme. Link where possible with internationally designated days, such as biodiversity day. (To: *NGOs, UKOT/CD Government Departments of Environment and of Education*) (13)
035. Plan and run a volunteer programme, but identify the human and cash resources available for this to ensure that the programme runs smoothly and effectively – work within your means. (To: *NGOs*)
036. Reach out to possible partners. (This could / should include developers.) (To: *NGOs*) (13)
037. Communicate regularly with stakeholders. (To: *NGOs, UKOT/CD Government Departments of Environment and Education, Project designers and managers, Governors' Offices*) (13)

## **D. Renewable Energy**

As Hon. Claude Hogan, Minister of Environment for Montserrat, noted in the conference closing session, "we are the least contributors to the problems that are in the world in relation to carbonisation, sea-level rise and all the other threats and I greatly applaud the conference for having taken a really hands-on approach to dealing with conservation mitigation and the issues of protecting our environment. I think in fact this is

wonderful that we are continuing as small islands in our territories to make such a really valuable contribution to global affairs.”

Dr Hon Kedrick D. Pickering, Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources & Labour, British Virgin Islands, recalled the Caribbean Challenge Initiative spearheaded by Sir Richard Branson and in which BVI had played a leading role. He noted that all countries in the Caribbean region should endeavour to work towards 50% renewable energy.

A key message emerging from the discussions was that there is no shortage of ‘salesmen’ offering technologies and specific technological expertise, but there is a lack of understanding (not just in the territories) as to what offers the best solutions. There is a need to ensure that soundly based and well-rounded advice is provided and that expertise and support is developed to ensure the options are well evaluated and the best combination taken forward.

The conclusions from this session are expressed as recommendations in respect of areas in which the listed groups of stake-holders (e.g. Territory governments, UK Government, NGO community, private sector and utilities) need to take action.

## **D1. Territory Governments**

### **Policy**

038. Political will needs to be bolstered and demonstrated by commitment to address need for policy change, incentives. (10)
039. For those territories which have committed to energy transition, ensuring the right legislative framework is in place is key; knowledge sharing and support is critical. (10)

### **Planning**

040. When setting the vision for energy transition, UKOTs/CDs should identify and involve partners early on in the process and create a vision in which each person living in a territory can clearly see and define their role. (10)
041. Vision setting for energy transition should be followed by assessment of renewable opportunities, including comparing current energy system with the vision, developing a roadmap for renewable penetration and detailed integrated resource planning- technical assistance required. (10)
042. There is a need to focus on the long-term energy transition process whilst identifying also the quick win opportunities, e.g. LED street lighting, energy efficiency in government buildings, solar on schools, hospital retrofits. (10)

### **People**

043. UKOTs may need:
- Technical assistance to support fielding and evaluation of technology proposals;
  - Expertise on regulatory framework reform;
  - Assistance on commercial services (understanding the go-to market strategy for projects; developing technical specifications, contracts etc). (10)
044. UKOTs should pool resources on a regional basis, if appropriate also with non-UKOTs, e.g. Caribbean to apply for support required. (10)

### **Pathways**

045. UKOT Ministers are invited to discuss the support provided by France for its overseas territories to explore whether similar (technical) support can be provided for UKOTs/CDs. (10)
046. It would be wise to focus on sustainable growth of all sectors – many territories have 5\* star hotels, but far from 5\* hospitals and schools. (10)

### **Partnerships**

047. Establishing Working Group across UKOTs/CDs (and possibly on regional basis) might aid sharing knowledge/ practice, planning and resource requirements, e.g. similar to working groups established for Eastern Caribbean States. (10)

- 048. There is a need to establish (stronger) relationships with NGOs/research institutions such as IRENA to benefit from current initiatives, knowledge. (10)
- 049. Support is needed to assist governments in working with their utilities to plan future energy systems and identify clearly the value proposition for utilities. (10)
- 050. It would be wise to engage the private sector within territory to drive a more sustainable framework for industry with local operating costs reduced. (10)

## **D2. UK Government**

- 051. Capacity building, including ensuring that soundly based and well-rounded advice is provided and that expertise and support is developed to ensure the options are well evaluated and the best combination taken forward (10)
- 052. Assistance with policy and development of an enabling regulatory framework (10)
- 053. Technical expertise and support – providing feasibility studies, grid integration studies, thereby de-risking projects for the market (10)
- 054. Business advisory services – developing the go-to-market strategy for projects (10)
- 055. Communications and marketing, noting the points at 051 (10)
- 056. A possible role in progressing the economic viability of other technologies such as Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) (10)
- 057. DECC should follow up on the post-JMC Renewable Technologies workshop, with a view to developing renewable roadmaps for all interested UKOTs/CDs. (10)

## **D3. NGO/Multilateral Community**

- 058. Capacity building, including ensuring that soundly based and well-rounded advice is provided and that expertise and support is developed to ensure the options are well evaluated and the best combination taken forward (10)
- 059. Sharing best learning outcomes, e.g. work in the Eastern Caribbean on regulatory reform (10)
- 060. Coordination of regional programmes, e.g. in the Caribbean, Pacific, to enhance the potential for scale across a number of islands (10)
- 061. Development of island-specific templates to support the development of bankable projects, e.g. Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) templates, bankable criteria (10)
- 062. Development of territory-specific guidelines for retro-fitting buildings, e.g. schools, hospitals (10)

## **D4. The Private Sector**

- 063. Development of tailored financing solutions to support project implementation (10)
- 064. Capacity building, ensuring that training is included in the implementation of solutions on island, including ensuring that soundly based and well-rounded advice is provided and that expertise and support is developed to ensure the options are well evaluated and the best combination taken forward (10)
- 065. Programmatic approach to building solutions that enable the development of on territory businesses (10)
- 066. Ensure that investment supports/enhances local infrastructure (10)
- 067. Engage with utilities and governments to define the clear value proposition of renewables beyond cost per kw/h (10)

## **D5. Utilities**

- 068. Working with governments to develop operational plans in line with a low-carbon vision (10)
- 069. Developing a business model that focuses on reducing the level of diesel-generated energy and the amount of energy used on island, taking into account other relevant factors including population size and trends, starting point, etc. (10)
- 070. Supporting governments to develop well informed projects that are ready to move now, with competent grid integration studies – doing what can be done now (10)
- 071. Working inclusively with governments and others partners so that all can understand the needs of utility business models, including ensuring that soundly based and well-rounded advice is provided

and that expertise and support is developed to ensure the options are well evaluated and the best combination taken forward. (10)

## E. International agreements

### Conclusions

072. MEAs are an important part of transparent and accountable governance, demonstrating the territories' – and UK Government's – environmental credentials. (4)
073. The Environment Charter commitments and the Aichi goals and targets should be linked to actual working examples and successes. Promoting implementation of the Environment Charters, best practice and sign-up to MEAs, and demonstrating value in doing so, will be good things. (4)
074. Environmental Charters are an agreement between UKOT Governments and UK Government. Monitoring the progress should be collaborative process, involving also civil society, and using appropriate indicators of progress. (4)
075. As Hon. Claude Hogan, Minister of Environment for Montserrat, said in the conference closing session: "I want us to do measuring, reporting and have institutional arrangements in place with the UKOTCF which I continue to think is going to have an indefinite role to play in this exercise. Verification of the performance that we are doing against these commitments and against those commitments that we shall agree, means that our main trust is that the UK government shall help finance this. And we will put in place with them a compliance regime. Not compliance just for us, because we are going to be performing against our targets. We are going to make sure that there is a compliance regime that they respect in regard to the work that we are doing in fulfilling the international obligations of our entire United Kingdom and its territories." (15)
076. Biodiversity action plans may fit into more than one commitment/ goal/ target. (4)
077. The language of MEAs can be a bit daunting and even vague, and so specific examples can assist in better understanding them. The more familiar people are with them the better.  
[www.cbd.int/nbsap/training/quick-guides/](http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/training/quick-guides/) provides new quick guides to the Aichi targets. (4)
078. Past and current projects will already be working toward these commitments/ goals/ targets without having planned it. Furthermore, by quoting which targets being met by a project being done, or a bid being made, it should help in securing support. Also as a result, decision-makers tend to see that they are already doing so much that signing up is not too daunting. (4)
079. Within the Aichi Targets, the value of 'ecosystems services' are emphasized, which can provide a valuable tool for communicating biodiversity conservation and a sound justification for those less naturally inclined to be enthusiastic about biodiversity conservation. However, this is a double-edged sword and sometimes the intrinsic value, and status, of biodiversity may be undermined because of this. Thus promoting approaches that generate benefits for people alongside real gains for biodiversity (including the weird, wonderful and slightly obscure), for example consideration of 'favourable status' for species/ habitats, could be a useful ambition. (4)
080. Wide consultations across all sectors (in this case including: Government; NGO, farmers/land owners; research community – both local and international; wider society) are important to developing locally-owned priorities. (4)
081. Integrating evidence and outcomes into existing Government planning systems is important. This approach enables better implementation of existing national and international commitments. (4)
082. NGOs can be more effective by quoting the agreement being breached if something is happening which is damaging biodiversity. (4)
083. There are measures for both 'implementation' and for the 'outcomes' – which reflect a little how the European Commission has been monitoring the Habitats Directive. The initial assessment was 'Has the Directive been implemented?', 'Are measures in place?' 'Have sites been designated? (indirect measures)' The next stages started to look at status of species and habitats, and subsequently aimed to assess trends in these species and habitats (direct measures). Whilst the Directive is hard law and backed by European Court action, softer approaches to assessment are likely to be appropriate where these firm obligations are not as apparent; e.g. measures that looks at presence/ absence of a charter, identifies tangible actions that match the Charter's aim (or can be linked to progress on Aichi targets). (4)

### Recommendations

084. It is recommended that the **UK Government** promotes the value of the Environmental Charters especially in relation to the MEAs and continues to support monitoring of progress, such as that in progress by UKOTCF, but also links the commitments to CBD monitoring and achievement of the Aichi targets (as the current UKOTCF exercise incorporates). (4)
085. The conference offered encouragement and support to **all territories** considering having further MEAs extended to them. (4)
086. **UKOTCF** was asked:
- i) to compile a list of benefits of association with MEAs and
  - ii) examples of positive outcomes and activities associated with each of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Aichi targets. (4)
087. It is not always easy to get the word out on progress in monitoring the implementation of the Charters and CBD, if, for example, (1) the progress is published in scientific journals to which not all other UKOT stake-holders subscribe and (2) because it is very easy for there to be impediments to progress in those UKOTs where a change in staff of one person can mean the end of a biodiversity programme actually functioning (and thus there being nothing more to report or monitor). The first point is often satisfied through the Working Groups and *Forum News*, but perhaps this can be expanded. As for the second point, again a more programme-based, rather than project-based, method may result in a better way to report and monitor progress. (*Part to UKOTCF; part to UKOT Governments and programme & project managers*) (4)
088. Everyone in the Territories (*UKOT Governments, NGOs*) is encouraged to identify how their existing and proposed activities meet CBD's Aichi targets (including via UKOTCF's current exercise). This will
- i) assist in the completion of National Reports for those territories that have had the CBD extended and assist in preparing encouraging evidence for those territories still considering extension,
  - ii) support and demonstrate relevance in funding applications, and
  - iii) identify gaps in delivery. (4)

## **F. Using informed decision making to manage development sustainably, including Environmental Impact Assessments**

### **F1. Legal Status of Environmental Impact Assessments, and of Environment Charters**

This section lays some emphasis on EIAs because of the content of the contributions. It is important to note that EIAs are very useful but only one part of the picture in planning considerations. Some aspects of the conclusions and recommendations may be relevant to other elements of the planning process. The effectiveness of EIAs is, of course, tied to where something requires a development consent (i.e. if it does not require a consent then there is no opportunity to ask for EIA). Therefore, the question of the scope of such a requirement is a relevant consideration in the planning process. Also, EIA is about understanding the impact and so is separate from then determining whether that impact is acceptable when weighed against other considerations (which is presumably a decision based on a policy position, which itself is another factor in the planning process). In terms of implementation, it is helpful to think about what each statutory regime is for, what the impact is and what the best mechanism is to control it (e.g. a landfill in the UK would probably require an EIA through the planning process, but the management of operation of the site would be largely through the EA and IPPC permit). It is important to note that there is not necessary regulatory control over some actions; dependant on the potential impact of any unregulated actions, it may be that new legislation is needed.

### **Conclusions**

089. The two Courts (Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal and Bermuda Supreme Court) that have considered the Environmental Charters have determined that they establish clear and binding international treaty obligations (unless signatory governments expressly disavow the commitments therein). (12)
090. In some territories, EIA is not mandated under law for any projects big or small. In others, there is a requirement in law but no regulations to implement. In some cases in which EIAs are undertaken,



they can end up being quite biased e.g. the EIA for one project was done by the engineer who had also done the project. An example of a perverse recommendation from an EIA process was that no mitigation was needed for the removal of coral reefs. Also, whilst usually a government official would make a recommendation based on EIA outcomes, in some instances the recommendations were overridden and the project was allowed to go ahead. There are some issues with the scale of developments for which EIAs are done. Technical Officers may look at every single development application and decide e.g. which one requires EIA. They may stumble when numerous EIAs come in but they do not have a huge number of scientists and technicians to review all of these. There is a need for more people who are qualified and who can watch what the developers are doing. Some of the capacity issues need to be addressed e.g. more people trained to deal with the large volume of developments that are coming in. (12)

### Recommendations

091. Fulfil UK's Environment Charter Commitments 2, 5 and 11, under which *the UK Government* must assist the UKOTs to review and update their environmental legislation, institutional capacity and mechanisms (including regulations and policies) to reflect the mandatory components of the Charters, including EIA as well as the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. (12)
092. Fulfil UK's Environment Charter Commitment 7, under which *the UK Government* must give technical assistance to enable (amongst other things) the *UKOT governments* to (a) establish best practice EIA protocols and (b) assess EIAs submitted by proposed developers. (12)
093. Fulfil UKOTs' Environment Charter Commitments 4 and 11, under which *UKOT governments* must require EIA for all major development proposals and for those proposals likely to have significant environmental impact. (12)
094. Fulfil UKOTs' Environment Charter Commitment 5, under which *UKOT governments* must require consultation with stakeholders as a component of EIAs (and other plans and developments). It would be worth thinking also about the concept of FPIC (free, prior and informed consent). (12)

### Conclusions

095. We have heard a great deal about the fact that responsibility for the environment has been devolved to the Territories. But we tend to overlook the basis on which this devolution is founded. In 1999, the White Paper recognised that, under the CBD and other MEAs, Britain has responsibility for the UKOTs meeting standards for caring for their environments, and therefore developed the Environment Charters which lay out what each territory must do, and also specifying what the UK would commit to do in support. The Charters were signed by UK and UKOTs in 2001. (12)
096. The Ombudsman for Bermuda had occasion to review the question of whether the Environment Charter commitments to carrying out environmental review and public consultation in approving a development proposal which would have significant environmental impacts applied in Bermuda, where they were not required by legislation. She determined that they did, and was supported subsequently by the Bermuda Supreme Court. She referenced also a number of other sources to support the conclusion that the Charters are binding international agreements, and not "aspirational" as the government asserted. The Charters have thus been validated by courts. They are valid, applicable and enforceable agreements between the UK and the UKOTs, so if UK is not living up to its obligations or the Overseas Territories are not living up to theirs, there is a mutually enforceable treaty. (12)
097. The Bermuda Supreme Court held also that (independently of the Charters) the obligation to require EIA derives from general international law. Domestic statutes, regulations, policies and guidelines ought not be inconsistent with general international law. Further, the Court held that, given that Bermuda's Development Plans are mandated by the Development and Planning Act, they have legal effect. Therefore, such UKOT Development Plans cannot countenance or retain the current discretionary language that would permit the Development Applications Board to dispense with EIA for major development proposals and for those proposals likely to have significant environmental impact. (It is important to note that the bilateral Environment Charters for the various UKOTs are similar.) (12)
098. The UKOT and UK Ministers actually identified implementation of the Charters as a priority in 2012 – see p.3 of the linked communiqué: "We have agreed to work together on the following priority actions...To continue to implement Environmental Charters, and to work towards the full

implementation Of Multinational Environmental Agreements where these have been extended to the Territories...” (12)

099. As Hon. Claude Hogan, Minister for Environment for Montserrat, said in the final session of the conference, “Something is wrong when we are still debating at this time whether a Charter on the environment is legally binding or not. This, in fact, would be a pre-requisite for the type of commitments we need to make to ensure that we clean up and protect our environment.” (15)

So the conference decided to urge the Ministers of the UKOTs to rely on the Charters when seeking the support they need for environmental work, as follows:

### Recommendations

100. **UKOT Ministers**, while recognising the commitments of their own governments under the Environment Charters (agreed with the UK Government in 2001), should continue to press the **UK Government** to fulfil its commitments under the Charters, including in relation to:
- Technical assistance, especially regarding technical and scientific issues like renewable energy, fulfilling commitments numbers 1, 5 and especially 7;
  - Use UK, regional and local expertise to give advice and improve knowledge of technical and scientific issues. This includes regular consultation with interested non-governmental organisations and networks.
  - Assistance with updating environmental legislation, fulfilling commitments 2 and 5
  - A ring-fenced fund to support 'projects of lasting benefit to the Territories' environments' (commitment 8). (This is worth a note. When the Charters were written in 1999, environmental projects in the UKOTs were funded by the FCO Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, so the treaty referred to that fund. By the time we met in Bermuda in 2003 that fund had been cancelled, to universal consternation. So, as a result of the Forum conference in 2003 in Bermuda, the Overseas Territories Environment Programme was started, with funds from FCO and DFID. This fund provided an accessible, ring-fenced fund for projects in the UKOTs, was managed initially through an open process through in which experienced NGOs and local Governors' offices played an important role, involved a level of bureaucracy that was suited to the UKOTs and provided funding for small-scale projects which were manageable by individual UKOTs. This was cancelled unilaterally by FCO in 2011 and replaced, after a year without a fund, by Darwin Plus (Defra/FCO/DFID), whose decision-making process is less open.)
  - Facilitating Territories' inclusion and compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (commitments (3 and 4).
  - Promoting cooperation and sharing of experience/expertise among the Territories (including by helping to fund regular UKOTCF conferences like that hosted by Gibraltar in July 2015) (commitment 6: to 'Promote better cooperation and the sharing of experience between and among the Overseas Territories and with other states and communities which face similar environmental problems.')
- This is why UK Government should continue to fund conferences of this sort. (12)
101. **UKOT governments** should implement their commitment to ensure that future development plans must provide for mandatory EIA as required by the Environment Charters and general international law. In accordance with Environment Charter Commitment 2, the **UK government** must assist the UKOTs to review and update environmental legislation to be consistent with general international law. (12)
102. With respect to the particular challenges of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the **UK and UKOT governments** should draw upon, second or otherwise leverage the technical and broad SIDS expertise of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the UNEP and other multi-lateral institutions in accordance with Environment Charter Commitments 4, 5, 6 and 7. (12)

## **F2. Requiring EIAs and standards of best practice**

### Conclusions

103. Recognising poor integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services in decision-making, together with ongoing damage and loss of ecosystem resilience throughout the UKOTs/CDs, **UKOT Ministers** should take action to ensure that EIA-related commitments in the Equator Principles, the Rio Declaration and the Environment Charters are met. These promote use of EIA as a tool for

sustainable development as part of strategic planning processes that mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services. Some of the features to address are:

- carefully checking the company being used to carry out EIA to guarantee that they will carry out a good EIA in the first place;
- looking at the impact as the development is happening but noting that the long-term effects also need to be considered;
- wide public consultation which is to make the project better; (“Interested and Affected Parties” (IAP), could be a good alternative term to use instead of ‘stakeholder’; this is often used in St Helena.)
- emerging standards on human rights (including FPIC, Free Prior and Informed Consent) and how these have to be respected when EIAs are done;
- whether there are any transparent grievance mechanisms in place in territories; (Montserrat Physical Planning Act has an appeals tribunal and complaints tribunal. This is worth considering elsewhere.)
- distinguishing between the complaints process and “please unmake decision and completely remake it and you can appeal to council” processes; (The public sometimes get confused between the two things.)
- whether there is a vetting process; (The Environmental Assessment Board in the Cayman Islands has to review applications to the developer. They review and say whether people can meet terms and reference and have ability to carry out EIA or not and then developers can choose. This is a process that could be used in other territories as well.)
- to be wary of paper processes which are not actually implemented;
- that EIA needs an Environmental Management Plan or system for independent audit against procedures. (12)

104. Material in terms of many EIAs can be very long and terms can be very technical. Information should be understandable for different audiences. It is also useful for local people to know the issues very early on. What is now the UK Supreme Court (i.e. House of Lords + Privy Council), the highest UK court and binding on the UKOTs, decided (*Berkeley v. Secretary of State for the Environment* (2001) 2 AC 603 H.L.) that EIA documents must be “comprehensive, accessible, non-technical.” The scope of the consultation needs to be understood by all participants. There needs to be a structure in place so that participants understand what their role is and that their contributions are considered.
105. The conference appreciated the recognition of UKOTCF’s contribution by Hon. Claude Hogan, Minister of Environment for Montserrat, who said in the conference closing session: “Since I returned to office in September last year, I was negatively moved by the fact that the previous Government had demolished a hill that we call Gun Hill, which was a sort of a fortification. I really loved this hill and then they demolished the hill at the cost of £3 million dollars and then a further \$4 million was used to fill a pond [Montserrat’s last mangrove wetland]. We have not found a solution yet but we are still intending to build a town in that area, and you can be assured that we will build it taking full account of nature. I want Montserrat to be the way the Caribbean used to be.” “Let me congratulate you all, and pay tribute to the work on Environmental Impact Assessment. I should tell you that ahead of this workshop ... I met Mike [Pienkowski, UKOTCF], and within 2 days we had agreed he would be coming to Montserrat, bringing two colleagues with him, including an EIA consultant, all on a *pro bono* basis. We are now going to embed EIAs in planning approvals in Montserrat. And all that has happened between September and now. And thank you very much, Mike, for finding Jo Treweek.” (12)

### **Recommendations**

106. **UKOT governments** should require EIAs for all (including both governmental and private) major development proposals and for those proposals likely to have significant environmental impact, and make them transparent and open (with copies readily available on-line) to local persons and outside experts to comment on, and allow reasonable time for this. (12)
107. **UKOT governments** should make provision for open and independent scrutiny and review, and should write into the terms of reference for EIA, that anyone can call for a review of EIA, as established by the Privy Council in *Belize Alliance of Conservation NGOs v. Department of the Environment* (2004) UK PC 4. If contractors know that their work could be open to scrutiny by other

consultants, this could have an important impact. Mindful that participation in decision making is embedded in the Environment Charter commitments, this should be happening anyway. During the sessions there were some excellent examples of the use of public participation to aid decision-making – but also some examples of disastrous decision making when the public were not consulted. So the Conference recommended that informed public participation by interested and affected parties be central to decision making in the territories. (12)

108. **UKOT governments** should put in place appropriate and effective legislation requiring EIAs that meet accepted best practice standards and make them available to guide practitioners undertaking EIAs and regulators who need to review them and act on their findings when determining development consent. (12)
109. **UKOT governments** develop follow-up and enforcement mechanisms and allocate the resources needed. (12)
110. **UKOT governments** should approach this strategically, so that environmental planning, monitoring and mitigation measures etc are in place well in advance of development proposals. (In this context, it would be useful to make a distinction between EIAs and SEAs (strategic environmental assessments) and what the role of each might be.) (12)
111. **UKOT governments** should ensure that the EIA process is embedded in, and forms part of, the planning/ development consent process. This ensures that it is considered as part of the decision-making process, in accordance with the Privy Council decision in *Save Guana Cay Reef Association v. R* (2009) UK PC 44. Any recommendations/ mitigation measures from the EIA can then form planning conditions. (Here and elsewhere, there are references or implications indicating EIAs considering socio-economic impacts. It might be helpful to think about what is the expected scope of an EIA and whether there are other complementary assessments that could pick up socio-economic issues.) (12)
112. To enable this, **UKOT Governments** should have:
  - appropriate supporting policy and legislation in place regarding required outcomes for ecosystems, habitats and species
  - State of the environment reporting or strategic baseline data in place so developers, planners and EIA practitioners are aware of issues they will have to address to comply with this.
  - Assistance and capacity-building from (or resourced by) UK Government in line with Charter commitments to develop strategic sustainable development plans and devise effective impact assessment processes commensurate with significant threats and pressures. (12)
113. **UKOTCF** should investigate putting together a list of all the regulations and derive a set of best practices that we could all ultimately aspire to. It would be good to have statements from across *the territories* to see what issues come up in common, and to identify where the most serious revision of their EIA guidelines are needed so that this can act as an effective tool in terms of environmental impacts and better planning. (12)

### **F3. Importance of appropriate and effective legislation, and that EIAs are supported by policy and appropriate established standards**

#### **Recommendations**

114. **UKOT governments** should put in place appropriate and effective legislation requiring EIAs that meet best practice standards, and proper enforcement mechanisms, and allocate the resources needed to do this. Such legislation should make provision for the role of NGOs in the assessment process. It would be worth considering “fit-for-purpose” approaches, that are robust, but not necessarily so resource-hungry that the system is set up to fail due to lack of resources. (12)
115. **UKOT governments** should have clear policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services in place, to underpin standards and requirements. (12)
116. **UKOT governments** should have appropriate supporting legislation in place (e.g. protection of species and habitats) in order to create enforcement mechanisms during the development process. (12)
117. **UKOT governments** should ensure good baseline data exists, so that developers, planners and EIA practitioners are aware of what is present on site and the species/habitat issues they will have to address, as well as wider environmental effects on humans. (12)

#### **F4. Importance of a model for sustainable development planning**

##### **Recommendation**

118. **UK Government** should fund the development of a model that addresses the needs of UKOTs for sustainable development planning. This is urgently needed if biodiversity and ecosystem losses are to be slowed. Such a model should be inexpensive, easy to implement and readily accessible to decision makers of all technical capacities. (12)

#### **F5. Role of Civil Society**

119. **UKOT Governments** should ensure, by appropriate support and encouragement to civil society organisations, that decisions are informed by a wide range of information – scientific information, local knowledge, resource use information etc. – using just one of these sources in isolation can be counterproductive. (12)
120. It is worth **NGOs, UKOT Governments** and others investing valuable time and resources in informing and engaging stakeholders to assist in decision-making. Their input can really influence the outcome of a project. A good way to ensure a high level of stakeholder engagement in decision-making is to offer a variety of ways to get involved. If stakeholders can be given more responsibility, e.g. fishermen given a role in managing a particular fishery or site, they are more likely to become actively involved. Sometimes small jurisdictions are able to be more flexible in their approach to accommodate stakeholder input and achieve good conservation outcomes. (12)
121. **Managers** must develop creative ways to engage the public, and to make complex technical information accessible to both the public and decision makers. (12)
122. **UKOT governments** should ensure that civil society feels that their input will be taken seriously and considered carefully in the decision process. (12)
123. Small jurisdictions can sometimes face particular challenges in making the best use of science and other information for decision-making. Staff in government and NGOs are often particularly stretched, with very diverse roles and may lack technical expertise across the whole range of issues. Help is needed from **umbrella and linking NGOs** to facilitate exchange of experience on how to rise to these challenges. (12)
124. Organisations that bring together UKOT and CD representatives and member organisations and individuals could help with informed decision making by sharing case studies of good and bad practice, and **UK & UKOT Governments and other funding bodies** should resource this. (12)

#### **F6. UK Government should address its priorities:**

125. The key to sustainability is in ensuring that development in UKOTs is appropriate to a country's needs, while maintaining the ecosystem services on which economic growth depends. This cannot be accomplished without adequate development planning, based on environmental variables and followed up with a rigorous environmental impact process. Given this reality, the **UK Government** should prioritise assisting UKOTs with developing strategic sustainable development plans and devising effective environmental impact assessment and other planning processes. An audit of existing policies for all UKOTs would provide a starting point for this, which could be followed up with assistance for filling gaps. This would lead to a much more effective use for Darwin Plus funds than the current basis on which funds are currently allocated, which has been described by reasonable people as piecemeal and unintelligible. (12)

## **G. Stakeholder and User Stewardship**

##### **Conclusions**

126. Government has assumed (by default) the role of environmental steward in almost every situation; however, stakeholders and users also have an interest (in some situations, a greater one in practice) in ensuring that environmental values are maintained. The onus of stewardship could therefore fall on those who benefit the most from resource use. (7)

127. As Mr Victor Brownlees, Chief Executive of Alderney, noted in the closing conference session: we have “got to get local champions.” (15)
128. Government must also be accountable and transparent. A proposed Natural Resource Management Bill, being drafted in the BVI, allows for the public to sue the Government or a landowner if the environment is damaged in a way that has not been permitted. The emphasis on making Ministers accountable for their actions is key if public/private partnerships are to function optimally. (7)
129. Public registries of decisions made in Government that impact the environment are needed (e.g. in the BVI, the draft Natural Resource Management Bill requires a Certificate of Environmental Clearance before certain types of development can occur or for developments in environmentally sensitive areas). (7)
130. Stewardship roles can be shifted from the public to the private sector by incentivising good behaviour with green certifications, competitions and publicity. (7)
131. The transference of stewardship roles is one means to mitigate the economic and resource constraints often faced by Territories, and also ensures on-going stakeholder buy-in to long-term projects. (7)
132. Through project development and implementation within the UKOTs, UKOT-based organisations and linking bodies have developed their capacity in environmental/natural resource management. UKOTs are in a position to export this knowledge to and share their experiences with others who are engaged in similar work. Examples were given from both terrestrial and marine situations. (7 & 8)
133. The profile of citizen science should be raised and more widely accepted and used within natural resource management. Such integration of citizen science could increase community buy-in in conservation management because of their direct involvement in the management process. (7)
134. Citizen science must also be used with a precautionary approach. In some cases, data obtained through this means is reliable, but other times, it is not. It can be a useful tool when used to augment an existing knowledge base but should not be relied on to be the exclusive source of information. (7)
135. On this occasion, the conference had little content on cultural heritage, although it is noted that this forms an important part of the work of many organisations in the UKOTCF network. It was pleasing to have the opportunity to link with Heritage People. As Mr Victor Brownlees, Chief Executive of Alderney, stressed in the closing session “How can we balance the value of our natural and historical resources?” (15)

### **Recommendations**

136. A model of a systematic approach for engaging the community in stakeholder stewardship is being devised, e.g. with TCI’s Community Conservation Partner Program and UKOTCF; however, initial funding is needed to establish project protocols, procedures, legislative framework and training for all participants. Once developed, this model can be applied across territories. Funding could be provided by ***UK or UKOT governments or other funding agencies***. (7)
137. NGOs working in and for the UKOTs should come together to develop cross-territory sustainable tourism guidelines/certification programme for tourism operators (for example, dive operators, tour guides, etc.), and take advantage of the IUCN publication *Guidelines on development in sensitive areas*. Such a certification program will have wide recognition and could prove to be more successful than single-territory certification schemes. NGOs can play a key role in building capacity and training. (To: ***NGOs and Funding Agencies***) (7)
138. Anguilla’s Constitution gives significant rights to land-use, which brings frequent legal challenges by stakeholders in relation to what and how they can use their registered land. This can be detrimental, economically and socially, but on the other hand it can be beneficial. UKOTs’ Constitutions should be amended to ensure that environmental management and conservation of ecosystems and their services are enshrined in their Constitution. Furthermore, it should be the Constitutional Right of Nationals to ensure that this happens. Hence, the Nationals will be held accountable for their practices on each parcel of land. (To: ***UKOT and UK Governments***) (7)
139. Management roles should be enshrined in law for accountability. (7)

## H. Legislative Framework

### Conclusions

140. The Cayman Islands model for National Conservation Law provides a framework from which other UKOTs can adapt conservation legislation. An emphasis on stakeholder and public consultation in the development of legislation is critical for long-term success. (7)
141. Greater judicial awareness is sometimes needed – as criminal cases may take precedence over the environment (e.g. it has been suggested that some judges do not take environmental cases as seriously as would be appropriate, and may not be as familiar with the issues at stake). (7)
142. Implementation and enforcement of existing legislation and policies play a critical role in ensuring that natural resources are used in a sustainable manner. However, this can be done only once there is a strong sense of political will and support for the assigned officers to carry out their duty without fear or favour. (7)
143. In the BVI, the National Parks Trust Act was updated in 2006, and a Natural Resource Management and Climate Change Bill is now being redrafted. During this process, advice was sought from throughout the Caribbean region, with resultant overwhelming feedback. Legislation from all over the region was shared, and the interaction with Conservation Departments in these countries on what worked and what did not was fed into the process – why re-invent the wheel? (7)
144. Conservation and planning/development legislation need to work hand-in-hand. (7)
145. People and organisations need to be engaged in the development conversation in ways that are meaningful and effective. This may mean that stakeholders and resource users may need to become more familiar with legislation and policy frameworks that guide planning and development decisions. (7)
146. Effective enforcement of conservation legislation is often hindered by a lack of economic and human resources. (7)

### Recommendations

147. NGOs, such as *UKOTCF*, can assist (as above) in the development of legislative frameworks by bringing UKOTs together (e.g. in the WCWG) to discuss what has worked and what has not worked. (7)
148. It is important that amendments are made to the building codes and Physical Planning Acts to factor in climate change as a means to build resiliency in the Small Island Developing States. Some countries have outdated pieces of legislation, which have not taken into account this growing issue. These necessary alterations are vital if we are appropriately to build resiliency and alleviate loss and damage. (To: *UKOT Governments*) (7)
149. Stakeholder participation and transparency should be mandated in legislation. (7)
150. Cross-territory experiences with Environmental Funds should be mapped, shared, and used as examples of frameworks for environmental conservation revenue generation. (*?UKOTCF*) (7)

## I. Economic and Intrinsic Value of Sustainable Use

### Conclusions

151. Environmental assets have economic values, and sustainable management of ecological and historic features represents economic opportunities that are often overlooked in the decision-making process. Non-monetary values are rarely considered. We need to move beyond solely economics when we value our natural environments; cultural and intrinsic values of natural environments need to be integrated into ecosystem valuation discussions. Greater emphasis should be placed on identifying non-monetary values and cultural services of the natural environment. Understanding non-monetary values and services helps to promote environmental conservation amongst decision-makers, resource users, and communities. An understanding of ecosystem values, both monetary and non-monetary, would inspire conservation ethics amongst resource users, decision-makers and communities. By strengthening ties between organizational structures, including NGOs, government and community stakeholders, such values can be brought to light with resultant multiplier effects across economic and social gradients. (7)

152. As Dr Hon. Kedrick D. Pickering, Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources & Labour, British Virgin Islands, said in the closing conference session: “The environment in BVI not just any old subject, it is the subject. Tourism is the main bread earner and largely based on the fact that the environment is so special. Study that showed 90% visitors to BVI come because of the environment. ... We have a commitment to protect the environment for future generations, and understand the value of what we have. We don’t want to make the mistake of seeing environment in Virgin Islands destroyed. We want to be locally and internationally a champion for the environment.” (15)
153. For effective results, UKOTs and CDs (in common with Small Island Developing States - SIDS) must integrate development and wise use of natural resources; however, they are often hobbled by economic constraints. To ensure sustainable use, environmental considerations must be mainstreamed into the decision-making process, with valuation of economic and non-economic ecosystem services serving as a foundation upon which development decisions are made. (7)
154. Stakeholders should be involved in the decision-making process, with regard to ensuring public awareness of ecosystem values and services and the trade-offs that occur with development. In this regard, banking and insurance institutions can have a very influential impact on Governments. (7)
155. Unfortunately, economic valuation of ecosystem services is usually costly and some results have been criticised for subjectivity. Alternative, objective, easy-to-implement, cost-effective options are needed. (7)
156. Creating integrated land-management systems using GIS is a good way of getting the environment into the sustainable development discussion and planning process. GIS is very visible and projects can be phased in to gather the necessary base-map information (e.g. critical habitats, location of endangered species, lands prone to natural hazards, etc.). (7)
157. As in the BVI (and other localities), GIS can be used for the further development of integrated land management as a “joined-up” approach that includes cooperative efforts by Town Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and other government agencies. Cooperative effort ensures ownership of results by disparate interests and reduces cost factors. (7)
158. Different methods are available for economic valuations. It is the country’s decision to determine the methodology that is most suitable for their circumstances: that is, the methods which will enable them to collect the appropriate information needed. Frequently, monetary values cannot be attached to each service and the services are of a large scope. This is one of the factors that limits effective use of ecosystem economic valuation. (7)
159. Small island states should keep an open mind regarding the hard science and methodologies used in the developed countries. Due to small economies and resource bases, territories need to become more resourceful with determining methods that will work best for us. (7)
160. The ANEA approach in Anguilla focuses on specific ecosystem type values as well as the key services they provide to the Anguillian economy. As a part of Anguilla’s process, the National GIS Unit hosts the various maps that have been produced as a part of the economic valuation studies. In addition to this, the National Ecosystem Assessment project aims to produce a protocol for the sharing of GIS data in the Government system. This will further enable the incorporation of environment into the decision making process, even when environmental bodies are not represented at any particular development meeting. (7)
161. The capacity within UKOTs should be developed to enable them to continue analyses on their own. This will alleviate the need to import consultants who may lack detailed and intimate knowledge of the issues facing the country of concern. Many of the social and cultural issues are hidden below the surface and can be addressed only within the respective system. (7)
162. In the Anguillian scenario, a comprehensive environmental legislative package (“green”, “brown” and “blue”) has been drafted in a way that allows the Executive Council body to designate appropriately to relevant agencies. Although the legislation is under the Department of Environment, the skillsets to enforce the law already exist in respective departments. This is done to enable environmental management in Anguilla to be done in a holistic manner. (7)

### **Recommendations**

163. Economic and intrinsic valuation can and should inform the development of what some territories term National Sustainable Development Plans (but note that such terms may have different meanings in different places); however, such valuation is costly. A gap analysis of where such information is needed in UKOTs would be a good subject for Darwin Plus funding. (To: **UK Government**) (7)



164. Gap analyses, economic valuation and sustainable national physical development planning (noting again that precise terminology may vary between different territories) are primary components of sustainability and should be prioritised by the UK Government for funding purposes. (To: **UK Government**) (7)
165. One way to get Governments to address actively issues of environmental degradation is by having stakeholders being the advocates for the change in commonly used practices. For example, the loaning regime now being implemented by the World Bank, through its lending agencies such as the Caribbean Development Bank, requires the governments/countries to have in place key policies/legislation focused on the environment and factoring in some element of climate change. This is a condition under which a loan is given. The **UK Government** could institute similar conditions, but such conditions should be coupled with economic and technical assistance where needed. (7)
166. In the Eastern Caribbean Region in particular, there is much concern about the sharing of information in the Government agencies. The **UKOTCF** has played a leading role in information sharing. It will be beneficial if this Forum designates some time to discussing establishing protocols for data-sharing. (7)
167. NGOs, such as UKOTCF should be resourced so as to be able to continue to play the role of sharing positive outcomes, new methods and lessons learned among territories. (To: **UK Government and other funding bodies**) (7)

## J. Invasive species

### Conclusions

168. The conference emphasized that Invasive Alien Species (IAS) have been identified as one of the leading threats to global biodiversity recognized under the Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 8(h)), and this is especially so to highly vulnerable endemic species on these small islands. Also, invasive marine species are threatening local and regional ecosystems. (4 & 8)
169. IAS have had significant negative impact on “human health, the economy (i.e. tourism, agriculture), and native ecosystems. These impacts may disrupt the ecosystem processes, introduce diseases to humans or flora and fauna, and reduce biodiversity.” In recognition of this and that IAS can also be vectors of diseases or directly cause health problems (e.g. asthma, dermatitis and allergies) and can damage infrastructure and recreational facilities, hamper forestry or cause agricultural losses, as well as their cost to the European Union of at least €12 billion per year, continuing to rise, the European Parliament adopted legislation to tackle invasive alien species at EU level on 16 April 2014. Some key points are:
  - 67% of threatened birds on oceanic islands are affected by invasive species.
  - Feral cats have contributed to at least 14% of all known bird, mammal and reptile extinctions.
  - IAS are identified as one of the major threats to biodiversity in the UKOTs. (4)
170. Whilst some previous and current eradication projects have provided superb examples, some other previous ones have been *ad hoc*, with no analysis of benefits, feasibility or sustainability. Controlling and eradicating invasive species populations can have unforeseen consequences, as invasive species, such as cats and reindeer, often function as control mechanisms themselves. Control must therefore take an ecosystem approach to management. (4 & 7)
171. An RSPB study has proposed a top 25 priority islands (in the UKOTs) for invasive species eradication that together would benefit extant populations of 155 native species including 45 globally threatened species. (4)
172. Many projects are currently being undertaken in the UKOTs on many different scales. (4)
173. Prevention is the most cost-efficient and effective method against invasive alien species. Halting the establishment of potentially invasive species in the first place is the first line of defence. (4)
174. NGOs can play an important and efficient role in the control of invasive species, which is resource intensive. Partnerships are essential in many situations but governments need to take a lead role in biosecurity, especially in preventing the arrival of new invasive species, by development and implementation of IAS policy and management frameworks (e.g. conduct customs checks, inspect shipments, conduct risk assessments and set quarantine regulations to try to limit the entry of invasive species), (4)

175. Eradicating damaging invasive species is not the sole preserve of Governments, although their collaboration and consent are essential if others are taking the lead. NGOs can and should think big about what can be achieved to increase biodiversity in the UKOTs, especially where Government is unable and/or unwilling to take the necessary steps. Conservation NGOs have a role also in conducting independent scientific field-based and policy research and collaborative partnerships with governmental environmental departments, and facilitate capacity building. A key lesson is that the most effective eradication projects need to be taken in context and be part of an island (or territory) plan which accounts for the interactions between species and eradication methodologies. (4)
176. Partnerships with other sectors and stakeholders are also critical, (e.g. the private sector be proactive in supporting and enforcing policies and measures that support Government efforts to combat the spread of IAS). Such partnerships can work in monitoring of vulnerable pathways and implement measures where possible (e.g. horticultural trade, pet trade, agricultural produce, maritime industry etc.). (4)
177. Stakeholder involvement is vital for the success of alien invasive species management, not only preventing invasive organisms from reaching territorial borders, but also mitigating the risk of alien invasive species already within its domain. (7)
178. Cultural implications of invasive species eradication projects also need to be considered. For example, in the BVI a lot of negative feedback from the local community resulted from killing goats, as they are culturally a food source. This needed to be balanced with huge environmental damage resulting from destruction of vegetation and resultant erosion. Involving the local community to some extent can help (e.g. hire local goat-herders first to reduce the population before bringing in the shotguns and FERA/AHVLA). (7)
179. Similarly, as Hon. Claude Hogan, Minister of Environment for Montserrat noted in the closing section, the BEST-supported work is “doing a wonderful job in feral animal and invasive species control in Montserrat, a culling programme to be exact.” He noted that there are cultural problems in the culling of donkeys. He continued, however, “that the situation has gotten so bad that people have been injured, car accidents caused, and people are afraid to come out of their houses at night in certain villages because the donkey population has gotten well out of hand”, so that he is asking the team to talk to the people further and agree actions. (15)
180. Dog Island Rat Eradication project (Anguilla), though technically challenging, can be used as a model to highlight that rodent eradications can be used as a mechanism for conserving biodiversity on larger remote islands. (7)
181. More capacity-building in-country on how to conduct invasive species removal is needed. Bringing in overseas volunteers and consultants is very costly and can be sporadic, so species can get reintroduced and are not quickly addressed as the local capacity does not exist to remove them. However, by their very nature, eradication projects are finite and, depending on the nature of the territory, the project and the methodology, bringing in external experts may actually be a cost-effective solution. (7)
182. Such complex management approaches are often costly and highly technical, making them beyond the economic and human resource capacity of UKOTs. Where significant biodiversity threats are at risk, such as with Critically Endangered Turks and Caicos rock iguanas that are being consumed by cats, international funding agencies and NGOs have been playing a leading role. (7)
183. Ideally, multi-year baseline data should be collected prior to an eradication programme. If this is not possible, data collected during one field season is better than no baseline data. (7)
184. When establishing monitoring programmes (pre- and post-eradication), ease of replication should also be considered. (7)
185. Promotion of inter-island collaboration between UKOTs and independent states (e.g. within insular Caribbean) and inter regional capacity building for IAS eradication or control (e.g. Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII)) would be valuable. (4)
186. Results of eradications and monitoring should be disseminated to the public – and also through UK resources (for example, DEFRA and other UK-based organisations that have larger media teams that have access to large audiences). Public consultation is critical. (7)
187. Project implementers should take advantage of technology that is currently available, relatively affordable, and provides useful information (for example, remote sensing and camera traps). (7)

## **Recommendations**

188. Develop/implement suitable IAS policy and regulatory framework to prevent, control and manage IAS, as well as IAS strategies at the local and regional level, including the elaboration of IAS alert-lists, control methods (including “eradication”, promoting of assessment and feasibility studies for eradication or control of IAS, communication and outreach...). Where an NGO shows interest in eradicating an invasive species, the territory Government should generally support and encourage that initiative, and employ expert advisors to monitor and assess the proposed work on its behalf throughout its duration. Governments should ensure that eradication operations are carried out professionally, safely and effectively, but UKOT Governments may need to seek external advice to ensure that international best practice is followed in both the planning and implementation. (***UKOT Governments***) (4)
189. Greater public awareness and increasing the community’s role in controlling invasive species can be effective. ***UKOT Governments*** can also improve conditions by strengthening development agreements and legislation to prohibit importation of soil, landscaping materials and other biosecurity threats. (7)
190. ***UKOTs governments*** should acknowledge that invasive species are a global threat, and therefore should be encouraged to prioritise a list of the top ten alien invasions and develop invasive species strategies to manage their impacts. (7)
191. Develop early warning and rapid response systems at the local and regional levels to prevent introduction and spread (i.e. biosecurity). Expert advice must be sought, considerable thought given, and action taken in regard to preventing the re-introduction of an eradicated invasive species before the eradication has taken place. (***UKOT Governments***) (4)
192. It is essential to prioritise within each territory the most vulnerable places and threatened species as control of invasives is resource intensive. There are tools and examples of ways to do this. (***UKOT Governments and NGOs***) (4)
193. Promote prioritising system(s) to determine which islands or areas across territories have the highest priority for eradication as this is of strategic importance to determining the allocation of limited resources to achieve maximum conservation benefit. (***NGOs, UK Government & other funding bodies***) (4)
194. ***UKOT/CD Governments*** should strengthen protection against invasive species introductions, and implement invasive species culling of established invasive species (e.g. lion-fish), recognising that in some cases a regional effort (at both the preventative and culling levels) will be needed for such action to be effective locally. UKOTs should establish lists of species of regional concern and current status. (8)
195. Secure funding to conduct eradication/control of invasive species that are impacting on key biodiversity sites and endangered species, and to develop/enhance capacity in the UKOTs to manage such invasive species. (***UK Government and other funding bodies***). (4)
196. ***UKOTCF*** was recommended as a focal point for sharing ideas, information and experiences of invasives management. (4)

## **K. Biodiversity data**

### **Conclusions**

197. There is a dearth of scientific data in many of the UKOTs, and that which exists is often highly fragmented, resulting in ineffective management. (8)
198. The need for good quality biodiversity data for decision-making and monitoring progress emphasise the need for survey and on-going monitoring (this has implications for capacity building). (4)
199. Many and various sources of biodiversity data are available, remembering that:
  - i) specialists may be willing to offer expertise for free or at very low rates, usually plus costs,
  - ii) all existing sources may not have been tapped into, and
  - iii) organising these data in an easily useable and accessible form is essential for all partners.More could be made of the increasing opportunities through remote sensing, technology and partnership collaborations to develop more effective data-collection and analysis. Many of these data need to be collected for other socio-economic reasons too. Data-collection through academic research, citizen-science and developing expertise through specialist organisations (including ecotourism opportunities), ensuing data-availability from EIAs, and other survey related to

development/ private sector investment could play a significant role. The key argument against this is cost – and traditionally people have argued that money spent on monitoring is money not spent on conservation action; we need to demonstrate that well-planned monitoring can help reduce overall costs, and use other opportunities to source funds and resources (e.g. education, tourism). (4)

200. There are benefits to Red-listing species for particularly vulnerable flora and fauna. (4)

### **Recommendations**

201. Development of biological indicators to measure progress. The UK indicators tend to focus on certain groups (farmland and woodland birds, bats and butterflies) where there are well defined monitoring schemes, but historically ‘BAP reporting’ used a slightly more subjective ‘expert view’ approach to assess the priority species. A basket of key species and/ or habitats could be selected and trends measured using various surveillance approaches. An example of such surveillance is remote sensing. Assessment of whether trend analysis would be useful and, being really ambitious, ‘target statuses’ could be set for a range of species against which progress could be assessed. **UK and UKOT Governments and NGOs** need to discuss and research what could be considered achievable short term, and what might be needed to develop more ambitious approaches could be instructive. (4)
202. It is recommended that territories’ data are shared with UK, regional and global databases, particularly in relation to the highest priority species such as endemics. (**UKOT and other Governments, NGOs, other researchers**) (4)
203. There is a need for partnerships, collaboration and information-sharing to progress priorities for action. **UKOTCF** may be able to play a role in this. (4)
204. UKOT/CD and regional scientific capacity should be strengthened through the establishment of, or support for, existing scientific centres, which can also help promote/coordinate regional data sharing; existing centres/institutions should be approached to assess interest/capacity. There is a need for quality assurance of data and standardised metadata, and it is recommended that **UKOT governments** adopt ISO 19115 as the framework for their metadata standards. **UKOT governments** need to strengthen requirements for sharing of scientific data by visiting scientists (perhaps tying this as a condition of research permit). (8)
205. Under the UN Law of the Sea, UKOTs/CDs are entitled to access data collected within their EEZs and **UKOT governments** should establish the necessary mechanisms for accessing this data with the UK Government. **UK Government** should provide guidance/advice as to how international legislation (e.g. UNCLOS) may provide UKOTs with access to scientific data within their EEZs. (8)

## **L. Other aspects of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources**

### **Conclusions**

206. The diversity of the UKOTs and CDs (resources available, socio-economic circumstances, level of self-governance etc) should be considered by the UK and overseas entities when planning research and conservation initiatives; a standard approach is rarely appropriate and, to be effective in most UKOTs, solutions need to be developed from within the UKOT with local buy-in. Quantifying the monetary and non-monetary value of marine ecosystem services (e.g. fisheries, marine habitats) and integrating these into policy making is important. (8)
207. Whilst some UKOTs/CDs have scientifically based marine resource management resulting in MSC-certified fisheries, there is a history in some others of failed management action or attempted action being made in the absence of sound scientific data and without clearly defined objectives. (8)
208. Management action proposed in the absence of clearly defined objectives undermines community confidence. (8)
209. There is a general lack of resources necessary for undertaking scientific research and monitoring, and a need for capacity building within the UKOTs and improved information sharing amongst UKOTs/CDs. However, there are established regional institutions, which are starting to address this and can serve as coordination centres for better information sharing (e.g. SAERI). (8)
210. Threats to marine mammals, which are multiple in nature, are on the rise in certain regions. New approaches are required to address these, as existing measures are insufficient (e.g. marine mammal sister sanctuaries are being established employing marine spatial planning methods). (8)

211. Some UKOTs/CDs have achieved effective management; in some others overfishing, particularly of predator species, continues to be a problem, and is creating ecosystem imbalance. Illegal fishing remains a major issue, and monitoring capacity/surveillance is limited in some UKOTs. Highlighting cases where additional support is required could be useful, as well as those where these problems have been overcome. (8)
212. Climate change, particularly ocean acidification, is an increasing concern. (8)
213. There are many management/conservation success/recognised best practice stories and valuable lessons have been learned which should be shared, and can in some cases be applied to other UKOTs/CDs. (8)
214. Both the Chagos MPA and Bermuda Blue Halo initiative demonstrate, in different ways, the importance of identifying and consulting all stakeholders in the process of MPA planning, as well as the need to manage information dissemination. Both examples provided lessons to overseas agencies of the need for understanding local sensitivities within the UKOTs, over and above outside political influences. Projects need to be 'owned' by the territories themselves. The negative ramifications of poor MPA process to longer term marine management initiatives in the UKOTs was sobering. (8)
215. As Dr Hon. Kedrick D. Pickering, Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources & Labour, British Virgin Islands, noted, "all countries in the Caribbean region should work towards the protection of sharks and rays." He recalled that, to do this, the BVI Government took charge and took responsibility, generating some unpopularity because of this decision but he is happy that they took it, as fisheries are so important for BVI. He noted also that we have to protect the coral reefs, and to think ahead to achieve this. (15)

### **Recommendations**

216. **UKOT/CD governments** should manage their marine resources on the basis of sound scientific data, i.e. evidence-based decision-making. Management objectives, based on sound science, should be clearly defined and articulated by UKOT/CD governments, so that management tools (e.g. minimum size, seasonal closures, MPAs, gear-restrictions, catch-quotas, rights-based management, etc), tailored to address the specific, often unique, local or regional marine environment, can be applied. As a safeguard, it was agreed that the precautionary principle should be applied to resource management where there is insufficient data. (8)
217. Recognition by international bodies of often limited resources in the UKOTs/CDs is critical, and the need for the **UK Government and international institutions** to engage in full dialogue with UKOT governments and NGOs to understand priority issues and align research with the specific environmental needs of the territories is essential. UKOTs/CDs to develop catalogue of data needs and disseminate (**through UKOTCF**). (8)
218. The socio-economic vulnerabilities of small island communities need to be understood, and responsibility for ensuring full stakeholder consultation in the management of the shared marine resources must be taken by **UK and UKOT Governments** (i.e. a transparent 'EIA' approach should be adopted when seeking to implement significant conservation measures to ensure environmental and socio-economic impacts are widely understood and assessed). (8)
219. **UKOTs/UKOTCF** should explore opportunities for establishing/strengthening existing regional/international collaboration (e.g. 'sister' sanctuaries being established by French MPA Agency), particularly where migratory species are concerned, and the possibility of whale sanctuaries linked to those of neighbouring territories and countries should be given some priority. (8)
220. **UKOTs** should consider establishment of coral nurseries as species banks and development of artificial reefs. (8)
221. **UKOT/CD Governments** should strengthen/share with other UKOTs contingency planning (with support from the **UK Government** where relevant with regards to international relations) for major marine incidents. (8)
222. **UK and UKOT Governments**, supported by NGOs and others, should continue to explore ways of strengthening surveillance of illegal fishing activities for resource-poor UKOTs, investigating a range of methods, such as satellite-tracking, use of UK Government naval or other resources etc. (8)
223. Mechanisms should be developed or established and resourced for easy, effective sharing of examples of value/success of multiple management tools (e.g. **UKOTCF** conferences and website). (8)

224. Prompted in part by concern about human rights abuses on certain fishing vessels, it was recommended that *UKOT governments* should strive to ensure sustainable fisheries at the technical, social and governance level, achieving certification of their fisheries through a recognised international standard such as the Marine Stewardship Council. (8)

## M. Capacity and resource issues

*See also the section on Environmental Education and Awareness for further points in this area.*

### Conclusions

225. The scarcity of capacity and resources is a continuing handicap to implementing biodiversity conservation in UKOTs and CDs. (4)
226. UKOTs are severely limited in the funding sources available, and heritage preservation and restoration is rarely allowed in project applications. Those few bodies who have advised the conference that they have managed to find other sources are invited to share this information with others via UKOTCF. (7)
227. The Forum exists to assist in collaboration, communication and experience-sharing in order to maximize the value of conservation activities throughout the UKOTs and CDs. (4)
228. UKOTCF and other NGOs can best assist by continuing to serve as a network amongst UKOTs and between Britain and the UKOTs, and also by continuing to lobby strongly in Britain for access to funding not yet available to UKOTs - and perhaps to the creation of alternatives to Darwin Plus (which many have indicated that they consider too big and/or otherwise unsuited for some initiatives). (4)
229. UKOTCF and other NGOs could help by collating best practice examples – and mapping these across to specific Aichi targets and/or Environment Charter Commitments. This could also provide a point for collating ‘concerns’ that in turn could be followed through by the UKOTCF partnership, developed into ‘policy asks’ for HMG, or developed into collaborative funding bids. (4)
230. UKOTCF and other NGOs could continue to assist in brokering relationships between the different members for specific issues/ actions (including via organising conferences like this event and the write-up which in turn will help take things forward). (4)
231. The loss of a number of skilled and interested people because projects ended or funding cycles finished is a major concern. Two to three years is not sufficient to manage biodiversity – it needs to be a continuing process after individual project implementation. The best way to overcome the obstacle of capacity is to assist in building biodiversity management as a permanent cycle, even if it begins as projects. There needs to be a shift in the concept from a project-based biodiversity management to a programme-based one. (4)
232. As Hon Claude Hogan, Minister of the Environment for Montserrat noted in the final conference session, “We need to look and grasp the need to build capacity in our small islands because we experience extreme conditions.” (15)
233. It would be valuable to identify some specific issues that UKOTs could seek funding for the Forum to address or though developing joint projects with UKOTCF. For example, one area some UKOT organisations are interested in developing further is looking at what is, in effect, ‘scientific ecotourism’ (or pairing up of volunteer expertise with local needs) which could generate some extra man-power and other resources into projects. (4)
234. The Conference appreciated the recognition that Ministers gave to the value of UKOTCF, its conference and its network, for example: Hon. Richard Ronan MHK, Minister of the Department for the Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man Government, noted in the final session: “A special aspect of UKOTCF and the conference is Government and NGOs working together.” Both Hon. Claude Hogan, Montserrat’s Minister of Environment, and Mr Victor Brownlees, Alderney’s Chief Executive, indicated their wish to contract out more work to NGOs, Minister Hogan noting also the help UKOTCF had provided recently in bringing a major third party in to help resource Montserrat’s sustainable fisheries work. (15)
235. Funding mechanisms can be heavily bureaucratic to such an extent that laborious and technical application and fulfilment rules are unattainable by UKOTs (and SIDS), which are already struggling with economic and human resource constraints. A common resultant trend is that funding is often not available or accessible to the countries where funding is most needed. Heavily

- bureaucratic funding mechanisms are also economically wasteful. They require copious oversight during implementation, rigorous review and cost UKOTs considerable labour resources. (4)
236. Competition, even among and within UKOTs, for the same small pot of money results in many losing out, particularly those who lack the technical capacity adequately to seek funding, and many needs going unmet. NGOs, such as UKOTCF, can provide a critical role providing technical assistance to territories to help access funds. (4)
237. UK Government needs to be more aware of the importance of Darwin Plus, while at the same time recognising the ambiguities of the process and an increased need for equitable and fair distribution of funds. (4)
238. Participants need to recognize that the European Union (EU) as a funding body operates very differently to all others and there is very little room for negotiation once the contract is signed:
- When applying for EU-funding, applicants should understand the funding framework and requirements before beginning the project proposal development process.
  - Partners should recognize that the EU tends to prefer cross-territory and multi-partner projects with larger budgets.
  - Organisations interested in applying for EU funding should link/partner with a UK or EU partner that may be in a better administrative position to address reporting and financial requirements of EU funding.
  - Organisations interested in applying for EU funding should keep project activities realistic and flexible to accommodate potential changes (to the project and/or its budget) that may be required by the EU prior to project approval as well as during project implementation.
  - It is important for organisations that have benefited from Darwin Plus funding as well as Ministers of the Environment to highlight the importance of the funds and the funding mechanism to UKOT environmental conservation to the UK Government. (4)
239. Technical assistance to navigate the funding quagmire has been provided by NGOs, such as the UKOTCF participation in the MPASSE project. (4)
240. A video explaining complex structure of the European Union was shown. It is available on Youtube – ‘the European Union Explained’, and a link will be provided from [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org). (11)
241. Personnel from BEST hubs gave a welcome presentation on the forthcoming EU BEST funding which will unlock Euro 6 million for environmental initiatives in the Territories. (11)
242. Some funding mechanisms are more bureaucratic than others, so applicants should be realistic in what activities and how many are being proposed. Capital infrastructure is extremely time- and rule-intensive for EU funding, and tenders must be conducted for anything over a certain value. That is where UKOTs suffer greatly as the pool of qualified people is very small. (4)
243. Regional institutions are beneficial, but in some circumstances, they may not have built national and technical capacity. Regional institutions may focus on building their own institutional capacity and CVs while ignoring the island nations which they support. (4)
244. The conditions given by funding bodies place too much strain on UKOTs and CDs, which makes the work too project-focused, versus being programme-based, to allow for long-term continuity and success. These conditions come also with expectations that the territory will already have studies or works completed and ready for further advancement. At times, the cost to perform some of those vital studies beforehand is just not achievable with small islands’ fiscal resources, and this automatically eliminates them from being able to apply for the funds. (4)
245. The importance of getting to know your funder was highlighted. (11)
246. In reference to external NGOs with their own funds, pressure is generally placed on what they (these funding NGOs) want to achieve rather than what the country needs to have accomplished for their advancement. Such restrictions should be revisited to allow monies to be used more adequately and derive bigger rewards needed within country. (4)
247. Opportunities were recognised for the potential for high impact research outputs from universities and other research institutions which were part of the new requirements of the UK’s Research Excellence Framework.(11)
248. Collaboration between territories and between governments and NGOs boosts effectiveness. Hon. Claude Hogan, Montserrat’s Minister of Environment, noted “I want to borrow the phrase from my Gibraltar friend, Hon Dr John Cortés [Minister of Environment] that, in fact, all the UKOTs are punching above their weight.” Dr Hon. Kedrick D. Pickering, Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources & Labour, British Virgin Islands, reinforced this: “We don’t have to be big to have our voice heard.” (15)

### Recommendations

249. A greater understanding of the role of organisations like UKOTCF should be shared. **Funding bodies** need a better understanding of UKOTs and conservation challenges there, and the facilitation and assistance roles that some governmental and NGO bodies in the UKOTs look to in locally experienced umbrella conservation bodies. (4)
250. A particular problem is the short-term nature of projects that build up experience and capacity which is then lost from territories at its completion. In line with the views expressed at the conference, **UKOTCF should promote the benefits of programmes, rather than short-term projects, to maintain and build skills**, knowledge and experience. (4)
251. The scarcity of capacity and resources is a continuing handicap to implementing biodiversity conservation in UKOTs and CDs. **UKOTCF** should continue to address this constraint through developing partnerships in the metropolitan UK and the territories. (4)
252. The Conference acknowledged the importance of continued funding for research, education and implementation of conservation measures for the environment of the UK Overseas Territories. Difficulties of access to UK and EU funding streams were highlighted as there are restrictions because of the constitutional position of both funders and the Territories. Specific Overseas Territory funding was therefore particularly supported by the Conference. (To **UK Government, EU, other funding bodies**) (11)
253. Concern was expressed widely at the conference that the recent June 2015 launch of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Darwin Initiative for developing countries had not been complemented by the launch of the next round of the UK Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (Darwin Plus). The persons expressing this concern asked that letters be sent to Ministers of Defra, DFID and FCO on this point, noting that the £2m fund enables Overseas Territories Governments, local NGOs and UK Institutions to work together and deliver concrete results for the internationally important environments of the Territories, which hold 94% of the globally threatened species for which the UK is responsible; and that the constitutional position of the UK Overseas Territories makes funding in these areas exceptionally hard to obtain. If this fund is not available, crucial environmental projects will have no obvious funding stream. Funding from UK Government in this way is a commitment by UK Government to meet international requirements. (**UK Government**) (11)
254. It is recommended that biodiversity and its ecosystem services are included in national accounting systems to ensure biodiversity is fully valued for the long term benefit of the territories. (**UKOT/CD Governments**, with support from **UK Government**) (4)
255. A checklist of environmental infrastructure (e.g. sustainable physical development plan, habitat and ecosystem services mapping, legislative framework, etc.) should be developed for each UKOT. Rather than allocating scarce funding resources on a “winner takes all” basis, UKOTs can advocate allocation of funding where it is most needed. In some cases, this will be UKOT governments (which will anyway be involved re permits etc.), but in other places, funding will be better allocated to NGOs that can work among and between governments effectively. (To: **UK and UKOT Governments and other Funding Bodies**) (7)
256. A comprehensive checklist of environmental needs should be developed for all territories, with funding targeted preferentially to fill gaps. This need not be a whole new exercise. Existing initiatives such as the UKOTCF review of progress against Environment Charter Commitments and Aichi Targets, reviews of legislation and local reviews can provide much of the analysis. (**UKOTs/CDs; UKOTCF**) (7)
257. National perspectives and support from the **UKOT governments** (ministries/politicians /Cabinet) should be built-in. (7)
258. The Sustaining Partnerships Conference itself provides an important format for the exchange of ideas and the development of future collaborations, Mr Victor Brownlees, Alderney’s Chief Executive, noting “Knowledge is at its most powerful when shared.” All conference delegates were encouraged to focus on the development of future projects during and following the event. (**Conference participants**) (11 & 15)



## N. UKOTCF and its Regional Working Groups

Most of the topic sessions concerned themselves with the substantive conservation issues that were their subjects. The meetings of UKOTCF's regional Working Groups (Wider Caribbean, Southern Oceans and Europe Territories) also addressed such issues. However, these deliberately gave some emphasis also to the way in which UKOTCF operates. After the conclusions and recommendations from these Working Groups, the requests and suggestions for UKOTCF actions arising in the main topic sessions are summarised.

### Conclusions

259. UKOTCF provides an invaluable forum. There is a lot going on; UKOTs and CDs are often surprised to hear what is going on elsewhere. UKOTCF facilitates valuable information exchange, and enables cooperation, thereby also preventing wasting of scarce resources reinventing the wheel. (6)
260. For some aspects in some regions other linking fora exist (notably SAERI for research in the South Atlantic). However, for other aspects (e.g. other regions, conservation in the South Atlantic, etc.), UKOTCF provides regional networks in addition to its role across all UKOTs and CDs. It provides the potential for yet more close working relationships. (6)
261. There are many excellent projects under way in the UKOTs and CDs, as well as new challenges and opportunities. The situation was noted of "lots of demands, few resources", and the strong impact of small, well targeted projects. (6)
262. Widespread concerns were expressed over the low and reducing level of engagement of UK government and limited engagement of some territory governments in environmental work. (6)
263. Whatever the situation, information flow, cooperation, shared expertise, collating examples of best practice, etc. are all more important than ever. UKOTCF is a major facilitator here. All were encouraged to engage with and support UKOTCF and its Regional Working Groups. (6)
264. Hon. Richard Ronan MHK, Minister of the Department for the Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man Government, noted that, to achieve preservation of natural treasures, we have to work closely with our neighbours, learning from each other and gaining from experiences whether they be good or bad. This demonstrates the value of taking time out and sharing opportunities with each other at the conference. He hoped that the conference and the Forum will be a platform, and looked forward to building strong relationships in the future. (15)

### Recommendations

265. **UKOTCF** should, alongside its existing approaches, develop further the more thematic approach it has been developing across UKOTs/CDs, e.g. looking at invasive species, use of GIS, coral reef issues. (2)
266. **UKOTCF** should map the engagement of universities and other research bodies with the UKOTs and CDs, with a view to establishing closer links/partnerships. UKOTCF and partners should then consider how to exploit this engagement for mutual benefit, including through extending UKOTCF's current work student attachments/ secondments/ sabbaticals. (2)
267. **UKOTCF** should also (re-)engage stakeholders more effectively, aiming to build closer sustainable partnerships with other bodies with cross-cutting interests. (2)
268. **UKOTCF** should do more to raise its profile and that of the UKOTs/CDs, not least with a view to fund-raising. (2)
269. **UKOTCF** should aim to secure funding, not just for projects, but for feasibility and follow-up work. (2)
270. **UKOTCF** should consider holding more smaller conferences and workshops, on a regional basis, and/or with thematic focus in between the full UKOTCF conferences, ideally in concert with partners and perhaps in the UK as well as in territories. (2)

## O. UKOTCF role

UKOTCF continually checks what the territories want it to do, and tries to learn all the time. This includes too improving each conference.

UKOTCF works only for the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies – it does not have another agenda. It is involved long-term working with the territories, and understands well the differences between UKOTS/CDs and with UK. It has built up a position of mutual confidence with many partners in territory and elsewhere. Unlike other UK-based bodies, territories are not a small part of its business; they are its business. But that makes it vulnerable because it does not have other activities or income streams to buffer hard times.

The conference made valuable suggestions about what else it would like UKOTCF to do (see below). These ideas will be taken forward where possible on a priority basis following UKOTCF Council discussions and taking into account resources, as noted below the listing. During the conference, UKOTCF (the Forum) was asked to:

- Maintain that long-term continuity of relationships with the territories, and provide an effective network
- Compile a list of benefits of association with MEAs and examples of positive outcomes and activities associated with each Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi targets.
- Be a focal point for sharing ideas, information and experiences of invasives management
- Coordinate collaboration and information-sharing to progress priorities for action on dealing with invasive species
- Coordinate and improve access to data on UKOTs held by other institutions in various countries
- Facilitate exchange of experience and access to scientific and other information for decision-making
- Continue to coordinate availability of specialists, *pro bono* or well below consultant rates.
- Continue to address this constraint through developing partnerships in the metropolitan UK and the territories
- Map and share between territories legislation and regulations, e.g. for EIA, and derive a set of best practices that we could all ultimately aspire to
- Help develop cross-territory sustainable tourism guidelines, and play a key role in building capacity and training
- Build up links with cultural heritage conservation expertise
- Competition among and within territories for limited funding means many needs go unmet; UKOTCF can provide a critical role providing technical assistance to territories to access funds
- A comprehensive checklist of environmental needs should be developed for all territories, with funding targeted preferentially to fill gaps
- Develop collaborative funding bids with UKOTs to address points in these conclusions and others identified by the processes recommended here
- Be prepared to accept contracts from UKOT governments to address particular issues, as well as continuing to seek other sources of funding for agreed work
- Work with UKOT Governments and NGOs to press for better access to UK funding
- Help develop partnerships, collaboration and information-sharing to agree and progress priorities for action
- Collating measuring, reporting and institutional arrangements for verification of the performance Environment Charter Commitments, Aichi Targets and any further commitments agreed by the territories
- Explore opportunities for strengthening international and regional collaboration, particularly related to migratory species including whale sanctuaries
- Transference of stewardship roles requires some initial funding for training and establishing protocols and procedures. Such funding could be provided by governments or other funding agencies. UKOTCF can play a key role in building capacity and training.
- The Sustaining Partnerships Conference itself, and its follow-up and successors, provide an important format for the exchange of ideas and the development of future collaborations.
- Sharing what is going on in UKOTs/CDs, including progress in monitoring the implementation of the Charters and conventions, using the UKOTCF regional Working Groups, Newsletter, Website or Facebook page
- Providing Training for Teachers and developing Teachers' Education Materials (Curricula, courses, Resource Guides on various topics etc)
- Take a more thematic approach, e.g. looking at invasive species, use of GIS, coral reef issues across territories/CDs, as well as maintaining both all-territory and regional approaches

- The Forum should map the engagement of universities and other research bodies with the UKOTs and CDs, with a view to establishing closer links/partnerships. Then consider how to exploit this and other links for mutual benefit, including through student attachments/secondments/sabbaticals and extending UKOTCF's volunteer programme.
- Continue to play the role of sharing positive outcomes, new methods and lessons learned among territories, and collating best-practice examples
- Consider holding smaller conferences, on a regional basis, and/or with thematic focus in between the full UKOTCF Conference
- Continue to help and guide Stuart McPherson with his video/book programme
- Continue to help flow, cooperation, shared expertise, examples of best practice, all more important than ever
- Continue to be major facilitator
- Continue to provide technical and managerial assistance and advice
- Continue to develop and evolve, including in respect of the conferences
- There is a lot going on; UKOTs and CDs are often surprised to hear what is going on elsewhere. UKOTCF should continue to facilitate valuable information exchange, and enable cooperation, thereby also preventing wasting of scarce resources reinventing the wheel
- Aim to secure funding, not just for projects, but for feasibility and follow-up work.
- UKOTCF should do more to raise its profile and that of the UKOTs/CDs, not least with a view to fund-raising.

Here is the challenge. UKOTCF needs help to provide the help territories say they want from it. The Forum is therefore grateful to territories for offering to host and fund future conferences – this is a major boost. Hon. Claude Hogan, Montserrat's Minister of Environment said: "I am putting the entire Forum on notice that the next conference shall be held – God willing – in Montserrat [probably in 2018]." Mr Victor Brownlees, Alderney's Chief Executive, offered to work to fund and host the following conference, probably in 2021, and Hon. Richard Ronan MHK, Minister of the Department for the Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man Government, offered to host another UKOTCF meeting, either a full conference or a smaller meeting at an earlier date. Dr Mike Pienkowski, UKOTCF, thanked all and indicated that he would follow up with them.

But UKOTCF needs help also in keeping the show on the road – because the very nature of the service that it provides in the ongoing services to help territories look after their environments it is difficult to fund-raise for.

UK Government used to help by funding projects, which UKOTCF experts did free or at low cost, so what would have been their payments for work were donated to UKOTCF's low but unavoidable running costs.

Also UKOTCF needs territory partners to adjust the erroneous perceptions of other funding bodies, used to dealing with bigger countries. It needs to be made clear by the territories that they want and need UKOTCF to help – and that it is are not some sort of parasitic consultant diverting resources from conservation. Our host, Hon. Dr John Cortés, Gibraltar's Minister of Environment, has repeatedly made that clear, as have Ministerial and other colleagues here, notably Hon. Claude Hogan, Montserrat's Minister of Environment: "I want us to ... have institutional arrangements in place with the UKOTCF which I continue to think is going to have an indefinite role to play." UKOTCF would appreciate and value these messages being repeated continually to funding bodies.

## Annex 1: developing the conclusions and recommendations

There was a widespread view amongst potential conference participants that the conference should strive to reach some clear conclusions and recommendations on the topics addressed (these topics resulting from wide consultations). Of course, time at the conference was limited, especially as territory participants had made clear that they did not want parallel sessions, which have been tried in some previous conferences.

To allow a good discussion time for each topic, talks (aimed to stimulate discussions) were all restricted to tight slots, and participants were encouraged to supply other stimulating material as posters (as well as in the proceedings).

However, even an hour of discussion time per session is tight for developing clear conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, UKOTCF tried to help this process.

UKOTCF expected that whichever way this was done would give rise to some criticisms, but the only way to avoid these would be not to do it – which seemed undesirable. Participants were asked to take this in the positive spirit in which it was intended.

In previous experience of conferences, both UKOTCF-organised and others, the first stages of developing recommendations emerged from the talks and posters. UKOTCF tried to emulate this process by getting a small team together for each session to gather their ideas for conclusions and recommendations. The Forum was anxious that these teams should be widely drawn, rather than be composed of core Forum personnel. Accordingly, the teams were made up of those based in the UKOTs or with an extensive background working there, including the speakers (except in a few cases where communications difficulties sabotaged this). Where received in time, the abstracts of talks and posters were also consulted by the teams. There were then discussions to attempt to generate a draft set of conclusions and recommendations for each session. These were **drafts**. As explained above, their purpose was to get done the ground-work which would otherwise take up valuable conference time, so that discussion time could be devoted to exchange of ideas, rather than drafting. The drafts were inputs into these discussions, so that the outputs could take account of the consensus of views in the sessions' discussions.

Collating such varied information put a heavy load on the coordinator(s) of each session team and UKOTCF is grateful to them.

Approaching matters in this way had an extra advantage: the drafts were circulated in advance so that participants could think about these before the discussion and, indeed, consult colleagues in advance if they wished. It was pointed out that the conclusions and recommendations do not commit anyone to anything. Participants in the conference were not formal delegates of their territories or organisations. The conclusions and recommendations (and the drafts of these) are reasonably concise summaries of best advice on the basis of the experience of the territory and subject experts brought together by the conference. Decision-makers from all the inhabited territories were invited by HM Government of Gibraltar to a closed session the day after the conference, and a majority participated or sent representatives. That sort of forum is the sort which might agree policy positions. It is the role of such others (and not the conference) to decide the territories' or the organisations' reactions to the conclusions and recommendations, and whether and how they intend to use them. The fact that an individual participated in the conference does not mean that they supported each conclusion and recommendation, and this should not be assumed. As Hon. Claude Hogan, Montserrat's Minister of Environment, said in the final conference session: "I really applaud the conference for having taken a really hands-on approach to dealing with conservation mitigation and the issues of protecting our environment." "I am promising and committing to be a champion for environmental issues in Montserrat and I'll take back to my cabinet the issues that have been unfolded here so brilliantly."

In order to minimise any constraints on each session team, a common structure was not imposed on the developing draft conclusions and recommendations. This was reflected in different approaches and lengths in the drafts for different sessions. Subsequent to the drafting, some formatting and numbering were added, primarily to aid reference in subsequent discussions. Whilst there might have been a preference for some of these drafts to be more concise, it was important not to impose a central control. It was indicated that the outputted conclusions and recommendations would be sub-edited both to shorter lengths and, in a few cases, appropriate adjustments to wording. However, this was deferred until after incorporating the results of the discussions, to avoid constraining the latter.

It was made clear that some draft wording provided by the various teams might need some polishing after the conference. Participants were invited to offer wording suggestions by email to the organisers rather than in discussion sessions, which were best devoted to the issues themselves, rather than wording details, and the organisers thank those who did. UKOTCF stressed that the draft was intended to open up discussion, rather than constrain it.

The session coordinators and the conference organisers then used the discussions from the conference and written inputs to amend and extend the draft conclusions and recommendations. There was some overlap in subjects for different sessions. The drafts were not consolidated prior to the sessions, again to avoid constraining the discussions. However, it was noted that some sub-editing and sorting would be done on the session outputs, to make these as manageable as possible, and to bring together sections on the same topic from different sessions. Once the drafts had been amended and supplemented by the discussions in the conference, this was done, except where doing so would have made other material from a session difficult to follow. Similarly, it was envisaged and indicated that the final outputs might be presented in various forms, including sub-sets for the different target audiences for the recommendations, and relating them to Environment Charters, Aichi Targets, MEAs etc. This has yet to be done.