



The Island Biodiversity Coalition brings island governments and partners together to accelerate island-led climate and biodiversity action and strengthen global recognition of island stewardship of critical ecosystems.

April 29th, 2026

Overview

The 7th meeting of the Island Biodiversity Coalition reflected a growing sense of momentum and alignment around the role islands must play in shaping global biodiversity, climate, and ocean action.

Discussions focused on how the Coalition can move beyond coordination alone to become a stronger platform for collective influence, advocacy, and practical support for island-led priorities. Members reaffirmed the importance of ensuring island voices, realities, and solutions are not treated as peripheral within global processes, but recognised as central to delivering meaningful progress across biodiversity, climate, and ocean agendas.

A key area of focus was advancing support for the proposed UN Decade on Island Resilience and using upcoming global milestones to strengthen coordinated island advocacy. This includes developing shared messaging, practical advocacy tools, and stronger alignment across partners to ensure island priorities are visible, connected, and backed by credible policy, legal, and implementation frameworks.

The meeting also reinforced a broader narrative shift already emerging across the Coalition: islands are not simply sites of vulnerability. They are leaders, innovators, and guardians of globally significant ocean and biodiversity systems, with knowledge and experience that the international community increasingly needs to listen to — and invest in.

1. Strategic Priorities and Key Outcomes

1.1 UN Decade on Island Resilience (Cameron Diver, Island Conservation)

The proposed UN Decade on Island Resilience was reinforced as one of the Coalition’s most important long-term strategic opportunities and a potential umbrella for bringing together island priorities across biodiversity, climate, oceans, and sustainable development.

At the heart of discussions was the need to reposition islands globally — not simply as vulnerable places on the frontline of climate change, but as leaders, solution providers, and stewards of globally significant ecosystems and ocean spaces.

The Coalition discussed the importance of the Decade in helping to:

- Shift global narratives around islands
- Create stronger political visibility and legitimacy for island priorities
- Support more sustained and coordinated financing beyond short-term projects
- Better connect existing global frameworks including the CBD, UNFCCC, and SDGs

Members agreed to work toward formal recognition of the Decade through a coordinated 12–18 month advocacy effort, using major international milestones — including CBD COP17 and UNFCCC COP31 — to build support and visibility. This would build on the IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolution on the Decade that was adopted in November 2025.

A strong theme throughout the discussion was that the Decade could provide a practical bridge between global ambition and on-the-ground implementation, while helping create a more unified platform for island-led action and collaboration.

1.2 Strengthening Island Advocacy and Influence (Nga Nguyen, Within Global and GLISPA)

The Coalition is progressing development of an Island Advocacy Package to help strengthen coordination and consistency across island messaging and engagement in international processes.

The intention is to develop a practical and accessible advocacy tool that can be used across meetings, negotiations, events, and partner engagement. Members discussed keeping the package concise and focused, with:

- Clear core messages
- Priority calls to action
- Shared language linked to the proposed UN Decade narrative
- Practical examples and island stories

Coalition members will contribute messaging, case studies, and examples from their own work and regions to help ensure the package reflects real island priorities and experiences.

The meeting also discussed the importance of identifying and supporting “Island Champions” — individuals who can help carry island perspectives into higher-level political and policy spaces. This includes people with strong implementation experience, trusted relationships, and the ability to connect across sectors and institutions. If you are interested in more information on this please get in touch.

There was recognition that advocacy is strongest when grounded in lived island experience and practical delivery, not just policy language.

The updated and more concise Island Advocacy Package draft is available [here](#). Members of this coalition are specifically asked to input your perspectives in the relevant section in this package.

1.3 Addressing Biodiversity Reporting Gaps Across Islands

Members raised ongoing concerns around the underrepresentation of Caribbean and Small Island Developing States data within global biodiversity reporting and assessment processes.

Challenges discussed included:

- Slow and complex funding processes
- Limited national technical capacity
- Reporting burdens placed on small administrations
- Weak or fragmented monitoring and reporting systems

The Coalition noted that these gaps have real consequences. When island data is missing or incomplete, island realities and achievements are less visible within global assessments, which can in turn affect influence, recognition, and future financing opportunities. It was identified that there is connection to an earlier discussion in the coalition on IPBES which was led by Dr Floyd Homer of Trinidad and Tobago.

There was strong agreement on the need for more proactive and island-driven approaches to reporting, alongside enhanced regional coordination and support.

Members also highlighted the importance of strengthening engagement with regional organisations and technical partners including the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, CARICOM, and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

1.4 Legal and Technical Capacity: ICJ Advisory Opinion

The proposed ICJ Advisory Opinion Pocket Guide was highlighted as an important practical tool to support island negotiators, policymakers, and partners working across biodiversity, climate, and ocean policy spaces.

Discussions focused on the value of translating complex legal findings into accessible guidance that island governments and stakeholders can actually use within negotiations and national policy processes.

Members noted that the ICJ Advisory Opinion creates important opportunities to:

- Strengthen accountability discussions
- Reinforce links between climate, biodiversity, and ocean obligations
- Support stronger legal and policy positioning for islands internationally

Alongside the Pocket Guide, discussions also explored the development in Micronesia of a Policy and Legal Learning Network (POLLEN) and future workshops in the Pacific region to support understanding and practical application of the Opinion at national and regional levels.

The overall aim is to strengthen island legal and technical capacity in ways that are useful, practical, and grounded in island priorities.

A small team is currently working on the pocket guide coordinated by Erin Derrington and including SPC, SPREP, OECS, Cameron Diver, Prof Francesco Sindico and student interns.

1.5 Strategic Alignment Around Key Global Milestones

The Coalition continues to align its work around a [shared calendar](#) of major international moments and engagement opportunities across 2026.

Priority events discussed included:

- London Climate Week
- Our Oceans, Kenya
- The Island States Ocean Summit in Japan
- CBD SBSTTA and CBD COP17
- UNFCCC COP31 and related preparatory meetings
- CHOGM in Antigua and Barbuda

Members discussed the importance of using these moments in a more coordinated way to elevate island priorities, strengthen collective messaging, and build stronger partnerships and visibility.

A major area of interest was the proposed [high-level island event](#) at CBD COP17, which could:

- Showcase island leadership and practical solutions
- Strengthen alignment between partners and funders
- Highlight implementation progress and ambition

- Mark 20 years since the launch of both Global Island Partnership and the Micronesia Challenge

There was strong recognition that the anniversary is important, but that the focus should remain firmly on the future of island leadership and implementation.

Please let us know if you are at any of these sessions. We plan to have some preparatory calls for some of these events to help with coordination so please look out for these invites.

2. Cross-Cutting Strategic Themes

Several themes consistently emerged across discussions and will continue to shape the Coalition's direction moving forward:

- Shifting the narrative from island vulnerability toward island leadership, implementation, and solutions
- Better integration across biodiversity, climate, ocean, and development agendas
- Stronger coordination and shared messaging across regions and partners
- Ensuring island data, perspectives, and realities are reflected in global processes and assessments
- Building long-term legal, technical, institutional, and advocacy capacity within island systems

3. Priority Actions

Coalition Leadership

- Advance advocacy for the proposed UN Decade on Island Resilience
- Finalise and circulate the Island Advocacy Package
- Coordinate planning toward a high-level island event at CBD COP17
- Maintain and strengthen the Coalition's shared events and engagement calendar

Coalition Members

- Contribute messaging, examples, and island case studies
- Support development of advocacy tools and communications materials
- Engage actively across upcoming regional and international platforms
- Help identify and connect potential Island Champions who can take forward a message on biodiversity, climate and oceans.
- Finalise and support rollout of the ICJ Advisory Opinion Pocket Guide
- Strengthen collaboration around island reporting and technical coordination

Closing Notes:

Next Meeting: May 27th, 2026

[Meeting and Video Link](#)