



***First report of:***  
**Making the Right Connections:**  
**a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities**  
**Grand Cayman**  
**30<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

**Organised by:**  
**UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, with the support of the Overseas Territories Environment Programme, and hosted by the Cayman Islands conservation bodies**

The Cayman Islands hosted an international environmental conference from 30th May to 5th June 2009, with a focus on UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small islands. The conference was organized by the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum in consultation with the Cayman Islands Department of the Environment and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands. It is supported by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development.

The conference provided a forum for government environmental bodies and NGOs to discuss key conservation issues, to highlight success stories, exchange ideas, and to forge partnerships – so that Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities that share similar environmental problems benefit from learning about one another’s history and experience of planning and conservation initiatives. The overall aim was to draw on similarities and differences in experience across the territories, to provide insights into common challenges, leaving participants better equipped to address local needs.

It was the fifth such conference following the first held in London in 1999, the second in Gibraltar in 2000, the third in Bermuda in March 2003 and the fourth in Jersey in October 2006. The proceedings of the Gibraltar, Bermuda and Jersey conferences can be seen at [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org). The proceedings of this conference also will be published on this web-site. In the interim, this **first report** includes:

[Speech by Huw Irranca-Davies, UK Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs, at the UKOTCF Conference on Biodiversity in the UK’s Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: Making the Right Connections: Thursday 4th June 2009](#)

**The speeches given at the opening reception:**

[Remarks from The Hon.W. Mckeeva Bush, Leader of Government Business and Minister of Finance Services, Tourism & Development, for the Opening Reception of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum conference “Making the Right Connections: A conference on conservation in the UK OTs, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities”](#)

[Remarks from The Hon. Mark Scotland, Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports & Culture, for the Opening Reception of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum conference “Making the Right Connections: A conference on conservation in the UK OTs, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities”](#)

**The initial summaries of each of the main sessions:**

[Progress on Environment Charter implementation](#)

[Environmental Education](#)

[Climate change – impacts and adaptation](#)

[Spatial Planning, Protected Areas and International Standards – assets or liabilities?](#)

[Raising our profile - engaging policy makers and the public](#)

[Invasive Species](#)

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[Joined-up thinking – institutional arrangements for environmental management](#)

[The statement agreed by conference participants](#)

[Thanks given at conference closing](#)



## **Speech by Huw Irranca-Davies at the UKOTCF Conference on Biodiversity in the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: Making the Right Connections: Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

I am delighted to be here to attend this conference, and to meet so many people from regions of the world that are often so distant from the UK, but so close to so many of our hearts and minds. I want to assure you, by my presence and by my words today, that you are never far from our thoughts and actions

We've come a long way from London. I don't mean the thousands of miles travelled. The first such conference – this is the fifth – was in London in 1999. Since then we've seen considerable progress in some areas, and you'll have heard Eric [Blencowe]<sup>1</sup> expounding about the Gyps culture and human-elephant conflict. But these don't have anything to do with small islands, and it's here where it's more difficult to identify such clear examples of progress. And we need to do so. [The project here in Cayman]<sup>1</sup>, "In Ivan's Wake", is an example, and I saw the evidence for myself yesterday. But there needs to be more.

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<sup>1</sup> Items in square parentheses [ ] have been inserted (with permission) to clarify a few items for a wider audience and to refer to a section (on joined-up-ness) where the Minister added to his speech as drafted.

So here we are again, joined together again to chart progress, to roll out those charts and map the way ahead.

I understand that this is the first time a Defra Minister has attended the conference, and so it is an honour for me to be the Minister doing so, especially on such a beautiful island with so much biodiversity here. I am also very grateful to the organisers, both here on Grand Cayman and in the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, for all the arrangements that have made my attendance possible, and for the immense hospitality and kindness shown in my short but busy visit.

This is also an island and a region which itself encapsulates the raging debate over how best to conserve the best, how to keep beauty beautiful, to protect biodiversity in all its myriad diversity. The UK's Overseas Territories collectively host the most precious, endangered and unique biodiversity to which the UK can lay claim. So halting the loss of biodiversity is of particular importance to us and it represents one of the greatest challenges we face today. Globally 10-30% of all mammals, birds and amphibians are currently threatened with extinction. Over the past 50 years humans have changed ecosystems faster and more extensively than in any period in human history resulting in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth. And it has been projected that we could lose a further 11% of biodiversity on land worldwide between 2000 and 2050. More than a tenth of biodiversity to disappear in the next 40 years!

We cannot let this happen. Biodiversity is important not just because we value it - and the membership numbers of wildlife groups, as well as attendance at this conference are testament to that - but because we depend on it for our survival. It matters not as a fringe issue for polite discussion at dinner parties or on the academic campus. It matters for its own sake, but for our sake too.

Not only do the myriad of species that make up life on earth have intrinsic value. But together in their habitats they provide us with the very essentials of life. They supply food and fuel, clean our air and water, and help regulate our climate. In short they provide us with a huge range of services - ecosystem services - on which our well being and livelihoods as humanity depend.

One quote you will have heard before sums this up: 'Biodiversity is not the luxury of the rich; it is the treasury of the poor.' The richness of healthy and abundant biodiversity is a treasure trove for all, but once gone, once squandered, there is no bringing it back.

Properly valuing the contribution of environmental resources to the economy is vital. I am pleased to say there is a lot of work underway in this area. At the forefront is Pavan Sukhdev's work on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity which we are proud to support, among other ways by giving one hundred thousand pounds last year to assist with funding the study. It has real value, and often real scarcity. But unlike a global economic crisis where one solution is quantitative easing - the printing of money in my non-economist terms - you can't reproduce nature when it's gone. There is no National Bank for nature. We have to treasure it now; give it value.

Of course all this illustrates that it is more important than ever for us to halt the current rate of biodiversity loss. At a global level. At a regional level. And at a national level.

And at this level the Government remains fully committed to taking action to address the loss of biodiversity both in metropolitan UK and in our Overseas Territories.

But what are we doing about it?

The UK Government agrees that more effective and better integrated support is needed for the UK's Overseas Territories in order to halt the loss of their biodiversity. Although environmental management of the Overseas Territories is principally and rightly the responsibility of the individual Territories, we recognise that many of the Territories do not have the sufficient financial or personnel

capacity to ensure the protection and safeguarding of the local environment and therefore need support.

My Department has committed a further two hundred thousand pounds to biodiversity in the Overseas Territories in 2008/09, to fund baseline survey work, enhance research capacity in the Territories, and support small conservation projects identified as priorities by Territory governments. This adds to the extra funding of fifty thousand pounds Defra had already committed for 2008/09 through the Flagship Species Fund, the added priority given to the Overseas Territories under the Darwin Initiative (and I shall turn to this in a moment), the extension of Defra's commitment to give extra support through the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, amounting to twenty thousand pounds, and Defra's continuing funding through JNCC, which came to two hundred thousand pounds in the year 2008-2009.

Funding from FCO and DfID continues through the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP). OTEP supports the implementation of the Environment Charters, and environmental management more generally, in the UK Overseas Territories, but has tended to focus on biodiversity conservation given the Territories' significance for biodiversity. FCO and DfID have each committed £3m to OTEP for the period 2004-10, and they are committed to continuing their support.

By the way, DFID are also providing three hundred thousand pounds for Caribbean Overseas Territories to participate in a regional climate-change adaptation programme.

In addition, we established the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity (IDMGB) in 2004, which comprises Ministers from DEFRA, FCO and DfID and the chair of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC); in addition, Ministers from other Government Departments can be invited for specific matters. While the Group's remit covers international biodiversity as a whole, biodiversity conservation in the Overseas Territories is currently its main focus as we saw in its most recent meeting only 3 weeks ago.

Through the IDMGB the Government is developing a strategy for biodiversity conservation in the Overseas Territories, building on a recent assessment of priorities for biodiversity conservation action carried out by JNCC and a similar assessment carried out by RSPB. This strategy will need to be underpinned by an urgent analysis of the costs – as well as the benefits – it would bring, together with confirmation of priorities for immediate action.

In short, joined up cross Government support for Overseas Territories is a reality.

We will also consider the potential to tap into other funding streams - both governmental and non-governmental – to help support biodiversity conservation in the Overseas Territories. DfID has provided JNCC with funding of thirty-five thousand pounds to investigate alternative sources of funding for environmental management in the Overseas Territories. This is expected to conclude in the summer. But there needs to be an holistic approach for each of the Territories, taking account of their diversity, needs, wishes and own identified priorities, as well as the availability of funding. There is a need for more comprehensive information on the status of ecosystems, as well as current and future threats, in the Overseas Territories. Baseline environmental information is available for all the Territories but the scope and quality of this information is variable, and in many cases it falls short of a full ecosystem assessment. Data on the marine environment is often poor. The most important gaps in data have been identified as part of JNCC's recent assessment of priorities for conservation action in the Overseas Territories. This assessment will guide future work. And we have provided a quarter of a million pounds towards this research.

We must also recall the important initiative of the European Commission, in following up the IUCN's landmark conference in Réunion last summer, bringing together all the European Union's Overseas Countries and Territories and Outermost Regions to discuss the issue of climate change and biodiversity in the context of these states. I think all who attended that conference, no matter where

they came from, realised that on these issues we share a common goal. We must conserve our biodiversity and we must look at ways of mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. In this year where we commemorate the birth of that pre-eminent evolutionist Charles Darwin, and the publication of the *Origin of Species*, it is right to remember he wrote, with incredible foresight: “It is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent. Rather, it is the one that is most adaptable to change.”

The Caribbean Overseas Territories have borne personal and traumatic witness to an increase in tropical storms; but also to temperature fluctuations, and erratic rainfall. All of these have had dramatic effects on the local environment. The autumn of 2005 when the Caribbean experienced one of the most devastating coral-bleaching events on record while hurricanes battered the Gulf of Mexico is still raw in the collective memory of the people, and the region, and the world.

Since the conference the European Commission has been developing a possible light-touch system whereby OCTs and ORs may obtain a more streamlined access to EU funding. It’s early days but the BEST system (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the Overseas Territories) may provide significant support for the future.

I’ve already given a name-drop to Charles Darwin. I think he’d be proud of what we’re doing with the Darwin Initiative. The Darwin Initiative is a significant component of our international conservation work. By providing funding to support the collaboration between biodiversity experts in the UK and local partners in developing countries, as well as in our Overseas Territories, it helps countries rich in wildlife but poor in financial resources take conservation action.

I have had the opportunity to see the benefits of the Darwin Initiative here. [Many Darwin projects provide examples, at the on-the-ground project scale of joined-up-ness – and, at a policy level, Departments are actively working in the same direction.]<sup>1</sup> The Botanic park in particular has proved to be a paragon of the principles of the Darwin Initiative, especially in that it has been used by other small islands as an exemplar for them to use in developing their own Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

The Darwin Initiative must count as one of the most successful initiatives that my Department has in its portfolio. And it is a major source of pride for me, the staff involved and the wider Darwin community, and as I said before, probably Charles Darwin is looking down on us here and smiling. Since its launch in 1992 the Darwin Initiative has committed more than seventy million pounds to over 640 projects in more than 140 countries. In that time it has committed over one point five million pounds towards projects in the Overseas Territories.

Results for the latest funding round were announced by Hilary Benn when he was in Nairobi in February for the UNEP Governing Council. At that time he announced that forty-three projects across the developing world will receive over eight million pounds over the next three years- two of the projects are in our Overseas Territories.

The first project is a so-called main project – lasting three years from this year. It aims at building civil society capacity for participation in biodiversity conservation in the Territories. It is a joint project across Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, here in Cayman, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos. I think it’s really appropriate to the substance of this conference, too, as it will really aim to “make the right connections”.

And, like the former Cayman Project “In Ivan’s Wake” the Darwin project I visited yesterday, I hope that this new project will be successful and provide material for other countries in the Caribbean and further afield to use.

The second project is a so-called “post-project”. Building on previous Darwin projects in the Centre Hills in Montserrat, it aims to set up a sustainable, locally managed programme to minimise the

destructive impacts of feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills. The final components of this year's funding round comprise twenty-five new scoping award grants, to support the development of future Darwin Initiative applications. Three of these are in our Overseas Territories. These are going to take place in Bermuda, St Helena and the Falkland Islands. It's difficult to imagine a wider scope of work being considered here.

And we are also funding four new fellowship awards, to further the development of the most promising project members in developing countries. Together these grants total over 135,000 pounds. I have decided that Darwin funding for conservation projects in the UK Overseas Territories should account for a much larger proportion of the annual Darwin budget of seven million pounds, to reflect the importance we ascribe to biodiversity in our Overseas Territories.

But, regardless of all this good news, I wouldn't want to have come all the way here today without anything new to say.

So I am very pleased to announce here today, that when I bring forward the new round of Darwin funding, Round 17, which I hope to do later this month, I shall also announce that Round 17 will see potentially over one-and-a-half million pounds being earmarked for Darwin projects in the Overseas Territories.

I shall also announce the creation of a new Overseas Territories Challenge Fund within the Darwin Initiative. This fund will be devoted to projects designed to prepare for main projects. But they will be much more than the so-called Scoping Projects already under Darwin, which last for only weeks and have a ceiling cost of three thousand pounds. And they will be just for Overseas Territories. The Challenge Fund will enable new projects to develop over a longer timescale, and commit a much larger amount of money, and probably around twenty-five thousand pounds for each project.

The Fund is intended actively to recognise the specific geographic and resource constraints affecting the UK's Overseas Territories. It is also aimed at giving Overseas Territories the best chance to secure a significant share of the substantial funding available under the Darwin Initiative.

And this is a Challenge Fund, because the challenge is now yours, to develop the project proposals and relationships with UK institutions in order to access this fund.

Beyond Darwin, our international work is focussed around the major biodiversity conventions. 2010 will see the formal assessment of whether the global and EU targets to reduce and halt the loss of biodiversity have been met. All countries, including the UK, have recently been preparing their reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity which meets in its tenth conference of the Parties next year, setting out actions taken and progress made. We submitted our report, into which many of you provided valuable input, just two weeks ago, and it has now been published on the CBD website.

We must continue to play a proactive role internationally - through the Darwin Initiative and our work around the major biodiversity conventions. The next Darwin funding round will be announced later this month, and this will continue to enhance our contribution to biodiversity work in countries where it is most needed, but where the available resources are insufficient to address the issues involved. And, as I've just made clear, this will include greater emphasis on welcoming proposals from our Overseas Territories.

The next critical issue is to secure a new global biodiversity target post 2010. This may take the form of a new target, or possibly a framework incorporating a series of targets. But what is important is that the momentum generated by the current target is not lost at the end of 2010, and that we redouble our efforts to achieve a halt in biodiversity loss.

International agreement on a successor to the 2010 biodiversity target must be secured. The existing target has galvanised action across the world by Governments and NGOs to tackle the most urgent

problems. We cannot afford to lose this momentum and must all redouble our efforts to achieve a halt in biodiversity loss.

It is clear that further progress is essential. We are committed to taking action to achieve this. We recognise the challenge, and the consequences if we fail are great. We believe our approach to international biodiversity work, including the Darwin Initiative, is making a significant contribution to biodiversity conservation abroad and in the UK. But overall there is still much more to do. Agreement to a post 2010 target should represent a call to arms to redouble our efforts at home and abroad to this end.

In closing, I would make reference to John Muir, the naturalist, writer and conservationist, who said: “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” We have to recognise that the challenges you face are challenges that are common to us all.

Thank you.

**Remarks from The Hon. W. Mckeeva Bush, Leader of Government Business and Minister of Finance Services, Tourism & Development, for the Opening Reception of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum conference “Making the Right Connections: A conference on conservation in the UK OTs, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities”**

Your Excellency, Governor Jack, former Governors Gore and Dinwiddy, distinguished representatives from the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, other distinguished overseas and local guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed my pleasure to join His Excellency Governor Jack in extending a very warm Caymanian welcome to each of you and to say that I trust that you will all thoroughly enjoy your time with us.

As you may know, the Government which I lead was elected just over a week ago but I want to assure all those present that we are aware of the many challenges facing not only this country, but all of the countries and territories represented here, in protecting and managing our fragile environment and resources in the face of a growing list of impacts and threats. I would also like to say that our government is committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure that we have the legislative means and policy framework that will enable our environment and natural resources to be adequately protected and sustainably managed.

I have noted with interest that one of the conference sessions on Monday will be on “*Climate Change – impacts and adaptation*” as this is one of my main areas of concern. Specifically, I am concerned about the way in which climate change and climate variability are expected to profoundly impact small island developing states both regionally and worldwide. While there is still some uncertainty in the precise predictions, it is widely accepted that climate changes likely to occur in our region will include:

- 1) an increase in the intensity of rainfall but a decrease in total precipitation leading to increased risks of droughts;
- 2) higher sea surface temperatures and more acidic oceans, both with the potential to significantly impact coastal ecosystems and resources; and

- 3) increased storm intensity with higher risks of flooding and coastal erosion.

All of these impacts have the potential to severely disrupt life as we know it, including serious impacts to one of the mainstays of our economy - our tourism industry. I am therefore very keen to see that our country takes immediate and deliberate steps to plan ahead and develop appropriate responses and strategies for adapting to climate change. I have been advised that we have begun this process under the “*Enhancing the Capacity for Adaptation to Climate Change*” project funded by the UK’s Department for International Development, and the establishment of our multidisciplinary *National Climate Change Adaptation Working Group* which is being chaired by our own Department of Environment. In the coming weeks I look forward to being further briefed on the work of this group and also to learning of the outcomes of your deliberations at this meeting.

I trust that over the next four days you will take this opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences and that you will have fruitful discussions that will leave you all better equipped to address the needs and challenges in each of your countries and territories. I wish you every success with the conference and I hope that you will also find the time to avail yourselves of some our warm Caymanian hospitality while you are here.

Thank you.

**Remarks from The Hon. Mark Scotland, Minister of Health,  
Environment, Youth, Sports & Culture, for the Opening  
Reception of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum  
conference “Making the Right Connections: A conference on  
conservation in the UK OTs, Crown Dependencies and other small  
island communities”**

Your Excellency, Governor Jack, former Governors Gore and Dinwiddy, other distinguished overseas and local guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the newly elected Minister of Environment I wish to add some very brief remarks to those of the Leader of Government Business, the Honourable McKeever Bush, firstly to join with him in extending a very warm Caymanian welcome to each of you and secondly to underscore this Government’s commitment to facilitating the conservation and sustainable management of our natural environment and resources.

I understand that today many of you had the opportunity to see and experience first hand some our unique and beautiful terrestrial habitats and species on the Mastic Trail and in the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park – I trust that you found the fieldtrips both enjoyable and enlightening. A few minutes ago you heard the Leader of Government Business mention that our Government is committed to ensuring that we have the legislative tools to afford the proper level of protection to these resources. Specifically, the Government is committed to passing legislation that will provide a comprehensive framework for the conservation and management of our biological diversity – both in terms of species and habitats. Among other things, the legislation will allow us to acquire, through negotiated purchase, environmentally important areas in order to establish a national system of protected areas on land that parallels our long-established and successful system of Marine Parks.

The Leader also mentioned this Government’s commitment to addressing the challenges posed by Climate Change. It is now well accepted that the loss of biodiversity destabilises ecosystems and

weakens their ability to deal with natural disasters like hurricanes, as well as the impacts of climate change – another very good reason to ensure that we take the necessary steps to set aside areas that will serve as reservoirs of the diversity of species and habitats on our islands.

As previously mentioned, the list of impacts and threats to our natural environment is growing and the challenges of finding appropriate responses are many. It is therefore encouraging to see that persons such as yourselves continue to commit to finding solutions to these challenges through meetings such as this one.

I join His Excellency and the Leader of Government in wishing you an enjoyable and productive conference, and look forward to hearing of the results of your deliberations.

Thank you.

## **The initial summaries of key points from each of the main sessions**

We will amplify these summaries in the proceedings. Necessarily, not all of even the key points will be included in the 3 minutes allocated to each session, and no attempt has been made to standardise the format.

## **Progress on Environment Charter implementation**

The Environment Charters were signed in September 2001 between UK Government and most of the UK Overseas Territories. This was to address the problem that UK Government answers for international commitments but Territory administrations deal with local legislation and implementation. These international commitments apply whether or not there is a Charter for a particular territory – and whether or not a Territory structures its actions using the Charters or according to some other format, such as a regional agreement. Therefore we include all UKOTs and Crown Dependencies in the UKOTCF collation of progress.

The summary (in your conference booklet) of progress of information received & collated to date highlight both some successes and some setbacks. We thank those who supplied information. Updating is a work in progress – further contributions welcome this month (to Catherine Quick), so current review round can be completed shortly after the conference.

Turks & Caicos Islands were cited in the discussion as an example where poor implementation of Charter Commitments, and indeed major damage to extremely important natural areas, can be caused by a government about which serious questions of corruption and mis-management have been raised (by House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee and independent Commission of Inquiry) – and which UK Govt is addressing under its responsibility for good governance. Clearly, the people and the hard-working conservationists of TCI are to be supported in their work in such awful circumstances.

As Isabel Peters outlined, St Helena made its Environment Charter a key document in its economic development plan. In a process facilitated by UKOTCF in some territories, St Helena stakeholders developed an environmental strategy by breaking down the commitments into specific actions. Some 40 bodies identified as responsible for taking action (sometimes the same person wearing hats).

This process was found fundamentally useful – but needs resourcing to the next planned stages, to use the full document as a source from which to produce time-limited priority sections, and also popular reader-friendly versions, as well as other aspects needed to take forward effectively.

Coordinating monitoring of progress in all territories, as being done by UKOTCF's current second review, is essential – but depends on local input. This needs human resources – as does encouraging all the responsible organisations actually to incorporate the agreed tasks into their programmes. Undoubtedly some work is being done on many aspects in many territories, but in most not coordinated to a strategy. A focal person is needed in each territory to promote implementation of the Charter Commitments (or the equivalent if using another coordinating structure). That needs resources.

There is some concern that UK and Territory Commitments are not being carried out in balance. One surprise was that Whitehall Dept have reduced staff resources to implement & monitor Charter Commitments. UK Govt progress was reported very fully at our 2003 conference but HMG could not resource input on its own performance to UKOTCF's first review of progress in 2006/7, even though it reported to Parliament at the same time that it was depending on the review to answer questions Parliament had asked. We are very grateful for officials to try to start collating and supplying information to the review but we can see that they are having great difficulties in resourcing this basic work.

## **Environmental Education**

What we wanted to do was to discuss ways of getting environmental education into schools curricula, how to effectively engage young people, and ways in which their involvement could be widened.

The draft paper in the Conference Handbook (p 57) gave some background to this, and posed some questions to consider when thinking about developing curricula elements and resources.

The importance of environmental education, the need to get it embedded into the schools curricula, and some of the challenges of doing this were raised very early on, during discussions on Sunday at the Botanic Park, and continued to be raised throughout.

During the Environmental Education session on Monday, we heard some very positive examples of how this had been achieved in Cayman and in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area.

Martin Keeley told us about the development of his Marvellous Mangroves programme, and how this had not only been fully incorporated into the revised National Curriculum for the Cayman Islands, but had been adapted for other countries, such as Brazil and Guatemala. His "recipe" for effective environmental education had been developed over many years, and had been widely used as a model by others.

Under the direction of Clive Baker, the director of curriculum services here in the Cayman Islands, a thorough revision of the Cayman Curriculum involving many stakeholders had ensured that environmental education was firmly embedded into the curriculum here.

A very valid point was raised by both Martin and Clive that you can't just put an environmental education resource into schools. It would just sit on the shelf unless it was curriculum linked, and teachers had been trained to use it.

We learnt from Thomas Hadjikyriakou how the Akrotiri Environmental Education and Information Centre had developed its schools programme, through very clear planning and community

involvement. This had been so successful that the Centre was incorporated into the Curriculum of the Republic of Cyprus, who funded a full-time teacher to work at the Centre.

We also heard from one of the founders of our student group, Piers Sangan, of his rather poor experiences of environmental education at school. At primary school, a topic on rainforests had been interesting, although of course this was not relevant to his local environment, but at secondary school environmental education was delivered through books and classroom teaching, rather than going outside and experiencing the environment. He had followed his natural interests in the environment through extra-curricular and volunteer work. Dustin, also from our student group, stressed the importance of getting parents involved via their children. This not only would inform parents, but there would be positive feedback in further encouraging the children to be enthused about the environment.

Edgar Howell echoed many people's concerns that the testing and assessment regime at secondary schools posed a great challenge in getting environmental education into the secondary schools. There was a need here for a "top-down" approach, where education departments needed to be encouraged to build environmental education into their testing and assessment process, to ensure that it was taught. We heard how in many cases this issue was addressed by using the post-exam period for field-based environmental education.

In further sessions we learnt of other positive initiatives and projects in getting environmental education into schools.

Stedson Stroud told us how Two Boats school on Ascension, with about 100 pupils, now undertook a great deal of environmental education work, including a lot of work in the field, outside of the classroom. This also got parents involved.

Pierre Pistorius reported how Ali Liddle, from Falklands Conservation, had produced resources on environmental aspects of the Falkland Island, linked to the curriculum, which were widely used in the schools. There was also a Watch Club which regularly undertook environmental activities outside, and had been very effective in involving parents.

In summary, the key points that emerged from the discussions which had occurred throughout the conference were:

Environmental Education resources produced for schools must be curriculum linked.

Teachers needed to be trained to use the resources

The constraints of the examination system at secondary school needed to be addressed. A "top-down" approach from Departments of Education was needed to get environmental education into the examination system. Another very effective strategy which could be used at secondary school was to use the time after examinations for environmental projects, as long as these involved getting the students outside.

Getting the students outside must be a key element of all environmental education – it needed to be hands on and fun. So teaching children about their local environment was a priority.

Involving parents was very important – this had the benefit of educating parents as well as the children, and providing positive feedback in increasing the interest and enthusiasm of the children.

I want to thank again the discussion panel and speakers in the environmental education session, our students for clearly pointing out the gaps in environmental education in their own experiences, and making positive suggestions, and all of you for taking our discussions forward in a very positive way.

## **Climate change – impacts and adaptation**

The key messages arising from presentations and discussions in the Climate Change session were:

### 1. Act Now – don't wait for perfect knowledge

In broad brush terms, we know enough about the impacts and potential impacts of climate change. That said, we do need to gather more locally relevant information to help refine practical adaptation work in the UKOTs and CDs. For example, the presentation from Darren Christie (Environment Officer, Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands) highlighted a particular issue facing South Georgia: previously isolated areas of land becoming accessible to, and threatened by, invasive alien species after glacial retreat.

### 2. Use all available tools and resources

Use rapid assessment tools such as those outlined as part of the DfID-funded project “Enhancing Capacity for Adaptation to Climate Change” which is currently underway in the Caribbean.

Engage all levels of government and civil society. Partnerships deliver a number of roles: education (climate change is real and the impacts on your area could be ....), co-operation (information exchange, etc) and empowerment (many small voices). Such partnerships are key to successful implementation of projects. Andrew Casebow (Agriculture and Environment Advisor, States of Guernsey) gave an example of this from his experience of working with various groups of people to produce *Planet Guernsey*, a book that outlines the known and likely impacts of climate change on one of the Crown Dependencies.

Adopt an integrated approach, in particular through planning and policy setting processes. Where integration is successful, multiple gains can be made (for people and for the natural environment). Lisa-Ann Hurlston-McKenzie (Sustainable Development Coordinator, Cayman Islands Department of Environment) showed how such integrated planning has been used to good effect in the Cayman Islands.

### 3. Biodiversity is part of the solution

Biodiversity will itself be impacted by climate change, but it is part of the solution e.g. through provision of physical defences along coastlines, watershed protection in uplands, carbon sequestration in organic soils and in the oceans. Healthy, functioning ecosystems provide services that help us adapt to climate change. There is more and more evidence showing that ecosystems that are high in biodiversity, and that are long established, are more resilient to ecological impacts.

Biodiversity needs to take its rightful place alongside social and economic factors when considering responses to climate change.

## **Spatial Planning, Protected Areas and International Standards – assets or liabilities?**

The session aimed to allow for the sharing of experiences and identification of opportunities and threats to the development of protected area networks within UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

The following seven presentations were given in the session

Colin Hindmarch (UK): Protected areas: a new context and a sustainable future.

Euwonka Silva (Turks & Caicos Islands): The role of environmental democracy.

Fiona Gell (Isle of Man): The marine perspective on spatial planning, protected areas and international standards.

John Cooper (South Africa): Declaring international protected areas in United Kingdom Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories: the role of Ramsar and World Heritage Conventions.

Stephen Mendes (Montserrat): Montserrat Centre Hills Plan: an example of planning and implementing protected areas at a site scale.

Noeleen Smyth (Ireland; and on behalf of Pitcairn Islands Council): Challenges for a small isolated island group – progress on the Pitcairn Islands Environment Management Plan, designated protected areas and sustainable development.

Joseph Smith (British Virgin Islands): BVI's Systems Plan: an example of planning and implementing protected areas at a national scale.

The session co-ordinators (John Cooper and Colin Hindmarch) identified the following main “take-home” points and messages from the session:

1. The need for transparency, democratic procedures and involvement of community, civil society and non-governmental organization within planning processes from the first stages and throughout out the whole activity or development;
2. The need for improvements to within-territory integration and enforcement of policies and regulations between governmental departments and entities;
3. The value of developing links for information sharing, capacity building and staff training both regionally (e.g. within the greater Caribbean) and between territories (e.g. between UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies and with UK);
4. The value in making and maintaining working links with European policies, programmes and budgets;
5. The identification and addressing of threats such as paucity of resources, finances, enforcement capacity and community and civil society engagement;
6. The desirability of more international protected areas, including Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance and World Heritage Natural Sites, within UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies , with the initial aim that all such territories and dependencies should support at last one international site;
7. The welcome proposal for a large Marine Protected Area in the near-pristine waters of the Chagos Archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory); and
8. The welcoming of the further improvements in functionality currently in progress for the on-line data bases for management and allied plans by UKOTCF.

## **Raising our profile - engaging policy makers and the public**

The 6 speakers in this session delivered their papers as outlined in the programme. A distillation of the presentations and the discussions they gave rise to is:

### CHALLENGES

- There is a common difficulty in identifying assets of ecosystems in a way that is accurate and acceptable to all.
- Funding through OTEP is grossly inadequate.
- Potential turnover in Parliament next year is an opportunity to engage with any new ministers/members at an early stage.
- Campaigns compete with core fundraising

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A dedicated junior ministerial post is created who is solely responsible for UKOTs.
- Position of the UKOTs on the Foreign Affairs Committee agenda should be enhanced.
- Recommend a shift towards the French model – where there is a presence of a territory representative within the French Parliament.
- The environment should be a taught element in seminaries.

### LESSONS

- Community based valuation exercises of the environment are often surprising
- Extended Cost Benefit Analysis = CBA+TEV is an effective tool
- Trusts like to donate to charity partnerships (ticks more boxes)
- Campaigning for fundraising works
- People champions create and maintain a public face
- Keep the message simple
- Power of engaging and mobilizing the younger generation
- Biodiversity conservation can be achieved through good governance and transparency
- Science and the church must respect and engage with each other
- Science is in danger when devoid of ethics and morality
- Isolation is insulation from influences that can allow us to change paradigms
- Conservation is a religious duty
- There is no mandate from God to destroy the natural world.

## **Invasive Species**

Invasive species remain a very major environmental concern across the UKOTs – they are now widely recognised as the second greatest threat to global biodiversity, and the most significant threat on many islands.

The Invasive Species session heard four presentations, on various aspects of the challenges faced in the UKOTs, and work on-going to address these. The presentations were followed by a stimulating and wide-ranging discussion. This highlighted, in particular, the need for:

### 1. Resourcing

More funding was desperately required to tackle the invasive species threat. However, as important was the need for a more strategic approach to funding, enabling support of long-term programmes, not just “quick fix” projects – the battle against invasive species could not be won through a scattering of “quick fix” solutions. A more strategic approach to funding would allow for much-needed, integrated programmes to be developed and implemented. The control of invasive species, for example, needed to be seen as a component of wider habitat and ecosystem restoration initiatives.

Resourcing constraints were not exclusively financial, but related also to limited local capacity. A more strategic approach to funding, and the development of integrated programmes, must incorporate support for sustained capacity-building activities, not just “one off” projects. There was a need to develop a cadre of people in each Territory with the capacity to make informed decisions and implement the necessary actions.

### 2. Emphasis on biosecurity

The need for robust biosecurity measures had become increasingly prominent in recent years. In the battle against invasive species, prevention of the introduction of potentially damaging non-native species is always more cost effective than control of those which have become established. Unfortunately, successful prevention measures do not produce visible results – you don’t see the species that have been kept at bay. Promotion of biosecurity can consequently be a challenge in some quarters.

### 3. Awareness raising

i) Amongst high-level policy makers.

In this area, the session concluded that it may be particularly useful to emphasise the economic costs of dealing with the impacts of invasive species, in order to promote greater appreciation of the need for control, and particularly prevention, measures.

ii) Amongst the public.

Environmental education comes in many forms, but schools programmes were seen as particularly valuable – children can be very effective advocates, influencing their parents’ thinking, and will be the policy makers and conservation practitioners of tomorrow. In a wider sense, it was felt particularly useful to emphasise the value of the native habitats and species that were threatened, as a means of educating the public about the threats posed by invasive species.

## **Enhancing Capacity - how on earth are we going to cope with the workload?**

All UKOTs and Crown Dependencies face a serious challenge in handling the amount of work required due to severe constraints on resources, both human and financial. The purpose of this session was to share the experiences of others, in how they dealt with this, and discuss ideas for positive ways forward.

The topics covered during this session included:

- Barriers to achieving project goals
- Funding
- Volunteers
- Role of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

**Fred Burton, Director of the Blue Iguana Recovery Programme, spoke about how they tackled resource issues.**

In Cayman, a comparatively well-resourced Department of Environment and the National Trust face 19 Habitat Action Plans and 43 Priority Species Action Plans: the maths works out at 0.07 trained biologists per Action Plan. There is a need to fill the gap between the need for human resources and the number of plans to be managed and implemented. The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme (BIRP) combines three approaches: maximising conservation work impact, extensive reliance on volunteer support, and partnership.

A flagship species (the critically endangered Grand Cayman Blue Iguana) enables preservation of the less charismatic but vitally important shrubland habitat and associated species. Establishment of a flagship species is a powerful way to engender public support.

Volunteers are core to the success of the programme. For BIRP in Cayman, suitable volunteers are recruited online, via a rigorous questionnaire and checking of references. Volunteers are given accommodation, but have to cover other costs. Training is provided. Volunteers need to be managed, so it is essential that there are enough permanent staff members to do this. Discrete work is given to different types of volunteers, local volunteers who take part regularly being particularly valuable.

Academic partnerships are harnessed to address target scientific needs, which must relate to detailed management and strategic plans.

Key points towards successful capacity building for BIRP were identified as:

1. Use flagship species if you have them.
2. Save many species by conservation of shared habitat.
3. Select, recruit and train your volunteers.
4. Look for postgraduates to produce conservation-relevant data.
5. Find and keep the right institutional partners.
6. Use Strategic Planning to hold it all together.

### **Colin Clubbe, Head of Conservation Team at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, spoke about bottlenecks to implementing action plans**

Colin reinforced the need for good actions plans, as a requirement to initiate activity and to keep conservation plans on course. Good plans resulted from the identification and inclusion of all stakeholders. Additionally, legislation, skills and capacity, and funding sources need to be identified and clearly outlined within the plan, so that actions are sustainable. Determination of responsibility for funding and actions should be clearly outlined within the plan.

Successful action plans therefore are inclusive, agreed, owned, resourced, funded, implemented and result in action.

### **Nikki Chapman, of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) reported on the database of funding sources which she was producing.**

Difficulties with obtaining funding for environmental work in the UKOTs is frequently a barrier to environmental work in the UKOTS. Nikki's role within JNCC is to establish a database of funding sources for UKOTs, and assist individuals who needed support in grant applications. To-date, she had identified 1,000 funding sources which were collated into the database, specifically targeting environment, nature or biodiversity. The database is accessible through JNCC's website. Participants in the conference were encouraged to look at the database [www.jncc.gov.uk/otfundingdatabase](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/otfundingdatabase) and contact Nikki if they needed support and advice on writing applications.

The database will be maintained by JNCC for six months after its set-up phase, and thereafter it was hoped that maintenance will be taken up by OTs. The importance of updating the database was discussed. Comment was also made that a lot of funding organisations were not aware of the UKOTs,

and that UKOTCF, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and JNCC could have an increased role in making funding bodies more aware of the UKOTs. The issue of funding organisations covering overheads, such as salaries and servicing costs, was also raised.

**Pierre Pistorius, Conservation Officer with Falklands Conservation, reported on how they mobilised local volunteers in support of environmental projects.**

Falklands Conservation supports five staff (three permanent and two part time). International volunteers are used on a seasonal basis – both professional and amateur birders during the seabird seasons. There are 27 local volunteers, mostly contract workers, or their otherwise unemployed partners. Volunteering allows them a chance to explore the island. They assist with projects including rat eradication, beach clean ups, bird counts, oil spill response, Tussac planting and seed collection. They also serve as important sources of information, e.g. reporting wildlife sightings. “Watch Groups” are established. These are clubs with a conservation focus, involving children and overseen by parents. Partitioning of the most suitable work between local and international volunteers is undertaken, with more “glamorous work “ being given to locals, to keep them interested, while international volunteers are happy to visit the islands. A dedicated staff member is required to coordinate and recruit volunteers effectively. A planned list of work priorities is utilised to keep work on course. The military is also utilised as a source of volunteer support. Agencies must ensure that volunteers are good custodians and represent the umbrella organisation in a positive light.

Key points towards successful capacity building in the Falkland Islands were identified as:

1. Effective coordination
2. Having a prioritized list of work / projects
3. Engaging military
4. Ensuring volunteers are good custodians
5. Networking with other organizations
6. Enabling locals to assist with passive surveillance.

**Stedson Stroud, Conservation Officer with Ascension Conservation, spoke about how they used volunteers in Ascension Island**

Stedson drew attention to the documentation and policy framework which exists to address Health and Safety issues associated with volunteers. Information packs produced by Ascension Conservation are considered a model by other South Atlantic entities. These are available online:

<http://www.ascensionconservation.org.ac/volunteers.htm>

Volunteers are engaged in species monitoring and cetacean work, turtles, endemic plants, control of exotic species, beach clean-ups and path maintenance. He concluded that volunteering works well as part of an integrated work programme. Morale was maintained in the form of traditional Ascension fish-fry by way of a “thank you”. It was agreed that thanking volunteers in some way was an essential element of a successful volunteer programme.

**Dace Ground, from the Bermuda National Trust and UKOTCF Council provided a summary of how the Forum had worked with partners in territories, and discussed future collaborations and the role of UKOTCF**

Dace reported that, initially, UKOTCF had worked mainly to co-ordinate the efforts of the UK-based member organisations to help meet the needs of the member organisations in the territories. Some of the many examples of successful UKOTCF activities which had depended, at least in part, on the co-ordination of volunteer input were listed. These included several major projects initiated by UKOTCF coordination, but which were now more associated with the UKOTCF member organisation which had then taken on the lead role.

With the successful development of these over several years, the Forum encouraged its member organisations to develop strong links between each other, so that the UKOTCF secretariat needed to

play less of a role of intermediary. The Forum re-directed effort to widen the involvement to include individual volunteer experts (mainly scientific) as well as member organisations in work to support local partners.

The work by UKOTCF with partners in the Turks and Caicos Islands provides an example of this, elements include:

- Identification, with the local community and TC National Trust, of the potential and needs for conservation, interpretation and sustainable use of the areas adjacent to the North, Middle and East Caicos Ramsar site.
- Darwin Initiative project to investigate the natural and other interest of these areas.
- Work supported by OTEP and many other bodies to use the Darwin results to implement interpretive and conservation facilities.
- Facilitation with TCI Government and stakeholders of a strategy to implement the Environment Charter, a pilot for other territories also.
- Work on the TC National Trust Primary School Education programme, “Our Land, Our Sea, Our People”

In recent years, UKOTCF has been investigating the potential for bringing in a wider range of volunteer specialists in addition to the scientific, conservation and education areas that are well established. One such volunteer was Steve Cheeseman.

#### **Steve Cheeseman – Notes from a “non-traditional” UKOTCF volunteer**

Steve gave an insight into volunteering from a volunteer’s perspective. Life-skills, time and the need to be challenged provided him with the impetus to participate with UKOTCF activities. Steve outlined his work in the Turks and Caicos Islands – finishing the Middle Caicos Conservation Centre – and demonstrated that a skilled and motivated volunteer can be an invaluable asset to an organisation. Challenges which Steve overcame included transport, construction and finishing – in many cases the work was physically demanding and far from glamorous. The facility is now used by visiting scientists and others. As volunteers, they were also asked to respond to reports of illegal development next to the TCNT site at the Indian Caves, effectively representing an extra set of eyes and ears for local staff. Steve also suggested that there may be a need to develop a database of volunteers with their skills and availability for project based work. Steve emphasised that volunteers should be prepared to pass on skills and knowledge to local counterparts, and there was agreement that international volunteers should only be considered if capacity was not available locally.

Jennifer Gray of the Bermuda National Trust commented on the crucial role of 300 volunteers in the “Buy Back Bermuda” campaign. Linking up with existing well-established volunteer organizations, such as Earthwatch and Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) was also discussed. At present VSO did not operate in UKOTs, but experiences of linking with Earthwatch had been positive.

The importance of having a reward or recognition scheme for volunteers was also widely agreed. Several partners in the territories had already indicated interest in UKOTCF developing the volunteer work. The Forum already receives offers of such help, and is working to develop a programme putting these together. Further discussion stressed that there should be a well-established volunteer scheme, with a structured application process, and contracts should be signed before the volunteers started work, setting out expectations and defining work. UKOTCF was encouraged by many to develop this coordinating scheme further, to marry up requirements with volunteer human resources.

## **Joined-up thinking – institutional arrangements for environmental management**

This session recognised that a joined-up approach is essential for sustainable development generally and conservation management in particular. It is built into at least three articles of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

We are pleased to note that the UK Minister for Diversity, Mr Huw Irranca-Davies, was able to give his address (given [in full](#) early in this report), which alludes also to joined-up work, within this session.

Conservation organisations operate through partnerships with other organisations which share the same aim. Gina Ebanks-Petrie described how the Department of the Environment, of which she is the Director, and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands work together.

Liz Charter (Chief Wildlife and Conservation Officer of the Isle of Man Government) identified significant legislation, government procedures, policies in the Island development plan and tools such as the Memorandum of Understanding, which have assisted in getting the Isle of Man government to develop a more joined up approach to the environment.

Michael Gore provided a valuable insight into the role of the governor in environmental issues, recalling his experience in the Cayman Islands in the 1980s. He emphasised how much a governor gets involved in conservation depends on the individual. The link between the good governance and good environmental practice gives a governor a platform for involvement if he or she feels the situation warrants it.

Alan Mills, a consultant who has worked in the South Atlantic as well as in the Caribbean, illustrated the value of GIS in information sharing on Ascension. GIS technology is adaptable and enables a joined-up approach through multi-layered mapping. He emphasised the importance of maintaining up to date datasets and sharing benefits with other community partners, in his case mapping road traffic accidents for the local police.

Mike Pienkowski briefly explained the state of the UKOTCF web-database which is being further developed and will be on line again shortly.

Colin Hindmarch introduced Marimar Villagarcia from the Canary Islands marine science institute who is collaborating with all tropical and sub-tropical overseas entities of EU countries in the NET-BIOME project, along with UKOTCF and others. The first stage is information sharing but this is expected to lead to further bids for EU funds for joint research projects.

The framework document refers to the recently formed UK Government Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity who have been asked to “adopt a truly joined up approach to environmental protection in the UKOTs and Crown Dependencies , bringing together all relevant departments.....and the governments of the UKOTs and Crown Dependencies.....“. We note that JNCC is going to develop a government strategy which should assist with the joining both within the UK and with the UKOTs and CDs. UKOTCF is asking to have an input into this further to progress a joined up approach, and were pleased that the Minister welcomed this.

## **The statement agreed by conference participants**

### **Statement to Huw Irranca-Davies MP, UK Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs**

This statement comes from the conference, “Making the Right Connections”, on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman, 30<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

The conference warmly welcomes the presence of a UK biodiversity minister for the first time at a conference on conservation in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, which we anticipate as a sign of a deepening commitment to the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

The vast majority of the unique biodiversity for which the UK is responsible is found in the UK Overseas Territories. Indeed, the UK Overseas Territories are the key to HMG meeting many of its international environmental treaty obligations. We note the Commitments made under the Environment Charters, which the UK Overseas Territories are striving to implement.

We applaud the recent recommendations from the House of Commons Foreign Affairs and Environmental Audit Committees.

We appreciate valuable assistance already received from the UK Government.

However, in line with the recommendations of the parliamentary select committees, we urge HMG:

- to recognise and deliver its own Commitments to the UK Overseas Territories under the Environment Charters;
- to identify a lead department for environmental conservation in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies; and
- to provide dedicated resources in order to enable sustained programmes that address pressing conservation needs.

We are committed to continue working together to achieve the highest level of environmental conservation in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

These concerns come from those participants who are representatives of Territory and UK NGOs, technical personnel of Territory Government Departments, and other delegates.

Grand Cayman, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009

## **Thanks**

### **In closing the conference, UKOTCF's Chairman, Dr Mike Pienkowski, said:**

On behalf of all participants, I would like to thank the following for the main resourcing of the conference: the UK Department for International Development (DFID) via the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP), its joint initiative with the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO); the Cayman Islands Government, especially its Department of Environment; and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) and its volunteers.

I would like to thank also the people of the Cayman Islands, who have made us so welcome.

The Governor, His Excellency Stuart Jack, gave us an excellent launch via the opening reception on Sunday evening – many thanks to him and all his staff, especially staff officer, Andy Holbrook, for much help throughout the planning. We are very grateful also to the Cayman Islands Leader of Government Business, The Hon. W. McKeever Bush, and the Minister of Environment, The Hon. Mark Scotland, for finding time just a few days after the General Election and their taking up of office to join us and formally to open the conference.

It was a really great pleasure also to be able to welcome Mr Huw Irranca-Davies MP, UK Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs. For a UK environment Minister to participate for the first time in one of our conferences is a major signal of developing support, which is much appreciated, as are his announcements. As some of you know, the Minister had originally planned to be present on Thursday with visits to local projects on Friday. Unfortunately, it became necessary for him to be back in London on Friday, and we thought that he might have to cancel. However, his commitment was so great that he arranged to reschedule his visit for a day earlier. (This accounts for some of the curious programming yesterday and today.) We are very grateful for this, and we should note also how much we enjoyed working with his supportive officials, especially Eric Blencowe, to make all this possible.

The conference centres on discussion and exchange of ideas and experience. However, it is difficult to generate this from nothing. Therefore, we are particularly appreciative of the speakers. It is a difficult task to select 15-minutes worth of relevant material from the riches of information that could be presented, and we are most grateful to those who achieved it without over-running and thereby reducing discussion time or slots available for later speakers. We want to link this to thanks also for the display exhibitors, who again have a challenge in getting so many key points into such a small space.

For both of those groups, we thank those who have supplied their texts and illustrations for the proceedings – and offer more thanks in anticipation for those who will help to reduce our work and stress by supplying theirs soon! By that means, we should avoid holding up publication of the contributions of others.

We should not forget that the various presentations and other inputs to the conference are based on the work of many people, often volunteers, in the various organisations represented by those attending. These include UKOTCF Member and Associate organisations, UK Overseas Territory, Crown Dependency and UK official bodies, and other participating institutions. We are grateful to them all.

I would like to thank especially the students and their lecturers – maintaining the fine tradition from the Jersey conference – and Ann Pienkowski, who has spent many months organising this involvement.

Lots of people are needed to make a conference go reasonably smoothly – and if it is going well, they remain pretty unnoticed. I notice them – because I would be in real difficulty without them! These include the session coordinators and chair-persons, the rapporteurs, those athletes like Stedson Stroud and Catherine Quick who have sprinted around with the roving microphone, Oliver Cheesman and colleagues who have juggled with computer projection of the speakers' presentations. (Oliver tells me

that he is amazed to be entrusted with a role with electronic equipment – but I have assured him that it is a matter of training and career development.) Thanks to the various photographers who volunteered to capture images of the event – and a reminder to make sure that they let the organisers have copies of their photographs please, as soon as possible. Most of you have not seen the conference office, where we have tried to confine the more chaotic elements. We are grateful to Steve Cheeseman who has reprised his work in the underground of TCI's Middle Caicos Conservation Centre by helping to reinforce our local partners in fighting our office network and printer. In that room, too, we discovered what happens to retired Governors and their spouses: some, at least, become volunteers and re-start their careers at the clerical level, by sharing the tasks of preparing conference packs! Thank you.

We got off to an excellent start on Sunday, with the tours and initial discussions taking place in very pleasant surroundings. Thank you to the guides and drivers, caterers, tent company, the folk at Pedro St James and, of course, the Botanic Gardens, as well as Fred Burton and his Blue Iguana Team – with guest appearance by Tootsie, the gender-challenged dragon.

We are grateful for the escape, on Tuesday, from conventional conference sessions, provided by UKOTCF Associate organisation, the National Trust for the Cayman Islands. We thank particularly: Roger Corbin, Chairman; Denise Bodden, Historic Programs Manager; and Frank Balderamos, General Manager (who had to be off-island). We would like to thank also: Caybrew for donating the local beer; Jacques Scott Group for donating the wine; Welly's Cool Spot, Elrita Seymour and Zelmalee Ebanks for preparing and serving the local food – a very important part of culture. We are very grateful also for music from the North Side Kitchen Band, piano in Mission House by Katie Moore (NT volunteer), Mission House Tours by Arthurlyn Pedley, Aida D'Angelo and others. And, of course, we thank performers Denise Bodden, Pirate Darwin Ebanks, Rita Estavanovich, David Whitefield, Michael McLaughlin, Erica Daniel, Chris Bowring, Pastor Alson Ebanks, Carmen Comolly, Kem Jackson, Jerilo Rankine and Stuart Mailer. Please pass on our thanks to those who are not here, and thanks to all of that team for the generous provision of their time and effort.

We hope to be able to thank soon the team from Red Sail who will look after us on the catamarans and, at dinner this evening, Kaibo.

We are grateful to the Westin hotel staff, especially our primary contact, Amanda Jay, who has been amazingly helpful in sorting out all our problems - for example, finding a meeting room for the Ministers' team last night, literally at less than a minutes' notice. I would also like to thank the team from Banquets, who are the ones who look after these meeting rooms and provide the lunches and break-time refreshments. They describe themselves as the team from Goa, in India, which is where many of them come from. So I guess that the hospitality in Goa must be particularly good too.

For some reasons, which we are still trying to work out, this conference has taken more organising than most previous ones. It is something to do with the amount of individual attention needed for most participants – but it is nice to be wanted! I would like to give a special thanks to my colleagues in the conference core team, Catherine Quick, Oliver Cheesman and Ann Pienkowski.

I have probably missed some, for which I apologise – but there is one group that I have left to the end because they have been so key to it all: the local organising team from the Department of Environment. We are indebted to Director, Gina Ebanks-Petrie, for huge support and for arranging that her staff and equipment be made available, while maintaining the busy schedules of their main work. We know that this has been well beyond the demands of duty. Many staff at the DoE have helped, and we thank them all. Lead roles have been played by Tim Austin and Mat Cottam. One unique resource though has been a particular person. Nothing has been insoluble to him – and we have thrown him some amazing challenges. Occasionally though, I have seen a grimace cross the unflappably cheerful face of the man they know as the Commander: John Bothwell. Thanks so much, John, and to all your colleagues.