



Greening economy is not a new concept, Cook Islands PM

By Online Editor

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Cook Islands Prime Minister, Henry Puna.

By Makereta Komai in Apia, Samoa for PACNEWS

Greening the economy is not a new concept in Cook Islands, says Prime Minister Henry Puna.

And, his country is one of the first allocate its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for marine conservation.

“In fact, we were the first to declare our EEZ as a whale sanctuary. This year is our sanctuary’s tenth birthday and in ten years the number of whale sanctuaries around the world grown significantly.

In another historical first, the Cook Islands Government in partnership with traditional leaders has begun community consultations to garner support for the establishment of a large marine park.

“I am pleased to say that there was overwhelming support from the Rarotonga public. The consultations are supportive of allocating approximately half of our 2.2 million square kilometres

of EEZ as a large marine park, said Prime Minister Puna.

“This is a significant proportion of our sea and ocean.

PM Puna said Cook Islands need to utilise its resources in a balanced manner.

“This is an attempt by Cook Islands to ‘green our economy’ while at the same time recognising that we are but small islands trying to be green in 2.2 million square kilometres of blue.”

The Cook Islands PM said greening the economy is ‘in our DNA.’

“Ingrained within us is the understanding that we are the custodians of our environment. But as time changes, we also need to change by drawing on our strengths, creativity, resourcefulness and innovation.

Rio+20 provide an opportunity to make our mark to the world.

“To make that mark n Rio +20 we need a smart plan.

“A plan will only succeed, if there is solidarity amongst us, said PM Puna.

Meanwhile, Samoan Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi cautioned Pacific Island decision makers to ensure owners of natural resources are not ‘short changed’ nor find themselves dispossessed of their resources and assets in desperation to achieve green growth.

“The bottom line is to achieve a delicate balance amongst the environmental, economic and social dimensions to ensure that the attainment of one aspect will not be detrimental to the others.

Tuilaepa said green economy is a timely response to the shortcomings of conventional development models.

Samoa has set an ambitious target to become a carbon neutral economy by 2020.

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