

## COMUNICADO

### ***Gobierno de Gibraltar: Ministerio de Educación, Patrimonio, Medio Ambiente, Energía y Cambio Climático***

#### **Firma de la Carta Blue Islands en Alderney**

Gibraltar, 2 de octubre de 2019

Una iniciativa que se originó en Gibraltar como idea del Ministro de Medio Ambiente, John Cortés, ha cobrado vida en Alderney, una de las Islas del Canal, y se comienza a implementar en pequeñas islas de todo el mundo.

Las islas y otros pequeños territorios rodeados en gran medida por el mar revisten gran importancia para la protección de los océanos y son especialmente vulnerables a la subida del nivel del mar derivada del cambio climático. En reconocimiento de la importancia de este asunto, la Carta Blue Islands aúna el compromiso de los Gobiernos de estas islas —ya sean estados independientes, territorios de ultramar o parte de otros países— para proteger el medio terrestre y el mar que les rodea.

El Ministro John Cortés estaba invitado a la conferencia “Wilder Islands” sobre la protección medioambiental de pequeñas islas en Alderney con la que se daba inicio a la Carta, pero no pudo asistir debido a la convocatoria de elecciones generales en Gibraltar. No obstante, el Ministro firmó la Carta en representación de Gibraltar con anterioridad y Liesl Mesilio, consejera delegada del Departamento de Medio Ambiente y Cambio Climático, llevó el documento a la Isla del Canal, donde otras islas presentes en la ceremonia lo firmaron el sábado. Keith Bensusan, de la Sociedad Ornitológica y de Historia Natural de Gibraltar (Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society, GONHS), también estuvo presente en la Conferencia, así como un viejo amigo de Gibraltar, Mike Pienkowski, del Foro de Conservación de los Territorios Británicos de Ultramar (UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum). Tanto Mesilio como Bensusan fueron ponentes en la Conferencia.

El Parlamento de Alderney emitió un comunicado de prensa conjunto sobre la ocasión (adjunto). El evento atrajo la atención de los medios de comunicación del Reino Unido y Mesilio fue entrevistada por el Daily Telegraph al respecto.

Gibraltar, Alderney, Guernsey, Jersey, Sark, Montserrat y Tristán de Acuña ya han firmado la Carta, que protagonizará otros eventos y recogidas de firmas antes de regresar a Gibraltar de cara a la celebración de una Cumbre Blue Islands en el futuro.

Gibraltar sigue desempeñando un importante papel en la protección medioambiental en los Territorios Británicos de Ultramar y Dependencias de la Corona, y John Cortés es copresidente del Consejo de Ministros de Medio Ambiente de los Territorios Británicos de Ultramar.

El Ministro Cortés declaró: “Sentí mucho no poder acudir a Alderney con el equipo, pero lo importante es la misión que estamos liderando: que las islas y otros pequeños territorios rodeados por el mar se conviertan en un ejemplo para los territorios de mayor envergadura en

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materia de protección de nuestros océanos. Resulta sumamente importante que las islas y sus comunidades forjen relaciones más estrechas e intercambien experiencias y conocimientos en todos los ámbitos y, en este contexto, en relación con asuntos medioambientales”.

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Blue Islands Charter Is Signed In Alderney**

An idea that originated in Gibraltar as the brainchild of Minister for Environment, John Cortes, has started its journey around small islands around the world at the Channel Island of Alderney.

Islands and other small territories largely surrounded by sea are important for the protection of the oceans, and these are particularly susceptible to sea level rise due to Climate Change. Recognising this importance, the Blue Islands Charter commits the governments of these islands, be they independent states, overseas territories, or parts of larger countries, to protect the seas around them and commit to environmental protection on land and sea.

Minister John Cortes was due to attend the 'Wilder Islands' conference on environmental protection on small islands in Alderney to launch the Charter, but was unable to do so following the calling of the Gibraltar General Election. The Minister however signed the Charter on behalf of Gibraltar in advance and Dr Liesl Mesilio, CEO of the Department of the Environment and Climate Change, took the document over to the Channel Island where it was signed by other islands present at a ceremony on Saturday. Dr Keith Bensusan of GONHS was also present at the Conference, as was long-time friend Dr Gibraltar Mike Pienkowski of the UK Overseas Territories' Conservation Forum. Both Dr Mesilio and Dr Bensusan delivered presentations at the Conference.

The States of Alderney issued a press statement on the occasion (attached). The event attracted media attention in the UK, and Dr Mesilio was interviewed by the Daily Telegraph on the subject.

Gibraltar, Alderney, Guernsey, Jersey, Sark, Montserrat and Tristan da Cunha have signed, and the Charter will make its way to other events and collect signatures, before returning to Gibraltar for a Blue Islands Summit to be held here in the future.

Gibraltar continues to play an important role in environmental protection among the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, with John Cortes being co-Chair of the UK Overseas Territories' Environment Ministers' Council.

Minister Cortes stated, "I was so sorry not to be able to be there in Alderney with the team. But the important thing is the mission that we are spearheading, that islands and other small territories surrounded by sea become an example to larger states when it comes to protecting our oceans. Closer contact between islands and island communities are valuable, as is exchange of experiences and expertise in all matters, and in this context, on environmental matters."

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## STATES OF ALDERNEY

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### **The natural environment knows no boundaries**

Acknowledging that the natural environment has no boundaries, Ministers and other representatives from the UK family of small islands met during the Wilder Islands conservation conference hosted by Alderney, and agreed the Blue Island Charter. The Charter provides a statement of principle on a number of initiatives previously discussed by the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Environment Ministers Council as well as other islands. These stressed working together on common issues which we all face.

Some key issues which the UK family of territories intend to pursue include moving towards a ban on single use plastics and, in general, controlling the impact of the Island's activities upon the terrestrial and marine environment. Crucially, this would be facilitated by supporting each other through open communication and education.

The various territories are also actively exploring the possibility of creating a joint biodiversity fund to support inter-island work. This fund would also be open to contributions from other parties, including governmental, corporate and private sources.

This charter demonstrates the will and intent of islands to work together for the benefit of all, to safeguard the environment and promote active collaboration on matters such as climate change. It portrays a level of commitment in promoting environmental governance in a manner rarely seen on a global scale.

**-Ends-**

**Note to editors:**

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**Interviews with James Dent and Liesl Mesilio will be possible at the conclusion of the Wilder Islands conservation conference, Island Hall, Alderney on 28th September 2019 at 13.00.**

**Photographs of the signing of the charter will also be available on request.**