



PRESS RELEASE

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For more information, contact:

Louella Losinio

Science Communicator

UOG CIS & Sea Grant and Guam NSF EPSCoR

University of Guam

Email: losiniom@triton.uog.edu

UOG, GovGuam partner with Blue Planet Alliance, discuss sustainability efforts

A heart attack gave tech entrepreneur Henk Rogers, founder of Blue Planet Alliance, a life reset.

He decided to use the fortune he made, in part, out of developing video games, and acquiring the rights to then-obscure Tetris, toward efforts to reverse climate change.

Rogers said he began strongly advocating against the use of carbon-based fuels particularly because of predictions that humans are “going to kill all the coral in the world by the end of the century.”

Rogers shared his life story and advocacy as the keynote speaker on Thursday at the 2023 University of Guam Conference on Island Sustainability at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

Addressing climate change and biodiversity loss will be the defining ecological, political and humanitarian challenge of our time, according to the recent article “Integrating biogeography and behavioral ecology to address biodiversity loss,” published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS), one of the world's most cited and comprehensive multidisciplinary scientific

journals. The article discussed how multiple sectors can work together to “modulate extinction risk.”

Based in Hawaii and New York, Rogers pushed for the adoption of Hawaii’s mandate for 100% renewable energy by 2045. Using coal and fossil fuel oil for power generation drives the high cost of living in Hawaii and low wages, Rogers said.

At the conference, Rogers, Governor Lou Leon Guerrero, UOG President Thomas W. Krise, Director Austin Shelton of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant, Lt. Governor Josh Tenorio, and other dignitaries signed up to form partnerships with Blue Planet Alliance.

The partnership with Government of Guam officials reinforced the island’s commitment to achieving its 100 percent renewable energy mandate by 2045, joining other island states and nations, such as Hawaii, Tonga, and Tuvalu, in signing the Blue Planet Climate Agreement to solidify their dedication to this cause.

Krise also signed a Memorandum of Understanding which officially made the University of Guam a member of the Blue Planet Alliance.

According to Rogers, codifying renewal energy goals through legislation is part of alliance-building, and ensures continuity of the commitment. He’s a proponent of starting initiatives from the islands and then expanding toward the nation and internationally.

Guam has a public law that sets a renewable energy goal of 100 percent by 2045. Senator Amanda Shelton and then-Senator Clynt Ridgell drafted the bill that became public law.

“Thank you so much that you have already done this for Guam,” Rogers said.

Shelton said the signing of the agreement is the start of an important partnership to fortify the island against the devastating impacts of climate change.

“This agreement not only highlights the importance of collaboration between sectors, but also emphasizes our responsibility to preserve the beauty and resilience of our island. Let us continue to work together in implementing sustainable solutions and championing climate action for Guam and our region,” he said.

Local initiatives

Speaker Therese Terlaje and Guam Delegate James Moylan also spoke at the conference on Wednesday.

Terlaje highlighted the various legislative measures that protect the environment and promote sustainability. These measures include legislation that supports the modernization of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the promotion of recycling, and Zero Waste initiatives, among others.

Addressing the conference participants, she said, "I look forward, with great excitement to the continuing collaboration of the Guam Legislature with all of you in this room, our neighbors throughout the region, to build paths to sustainability and to reclaiming our cultural practices, and localizing solutions."

Moylan recalled the abundance of island resources while growing up in Guam.

"We need to start building a sustainable future for ourselves and our island and these conferences are important to do just that," he said.

The conference is themed "Rediscover the Depths of Our Island Abundance." The conference wraps up with a youth summit on Saturday, April 15.

For more information, go to <https://www.uog.edu/cis2023/connect-with-us>