

Local conservationists joined colleagues from Mauritius and Reunion to share their experiences and promote future collaboration regarding restoration of island ecosystems.

The workshop was organised as the closing activity of the operational phase of the Rehabilitation of Island Ecosystems project, which started in 2005 and is co-funded by the Fond Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM).



It was led by the Island Conservation Society (ICS) on five islands in Seychelles together with private island owners, the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Transport, the Island Development Company and non-governmental organisations.

Attending the closing ceremony at L'Alliance Française were Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Transport Joel Morgan, principal secretary for environment Didier Dogley, North Island Resort general manager Martijn Brouwer and French ambassador Philippe Delacroix. Also there were ICS representatives and partners in the project.

ICS scientific director and FFEM project leader Gerard Rocamora presented the audience with a summary of the workshop, the project, its objectives, achievements and new steps to be taken.

He thanked all the partners who have made a positive contribution to the project and welcomed back the Indian Ocean Explorer crew who were held hostage until recently by Somali pirates.

The boat's owners have been key partners in the island project, and their representatives at the meeting included its captain Francis Roucou, who was among those released.

Addressing the audience, Mr Brouwer talked about the conservation project on North Island and the substantial achievements that have followed the joint partnership with the ICS and the Ministry of Environment.

He thanked all the sponsors who had joined in to support and fund the island restoration project.

Mr Delacroix also addressed those present, speaking about his embassy's commitment to the objectives of island restoration.

In his closing speech, Mr Dogley said the FFEM project is one that has involved a number of partners and has been very successful.

He congratulated the ICS team on setting a good example for other individuals or groups to follow and said Seychelles is among the leading states where island rehabilitation and restoration are concerned.

Mr Dogley reaffirmed his ministry's commitment to continue working with the ICS and said Seychelles needs to work with other partners in the Indian Ocean as the whole region is facing similar problems with island restoration.