



Many Strong Voices

– Turning Vulnerability into Strength

Many
Strong
Voices **MSV**
Arctic • Small Islands Developing States



MSV receives worldwide recognition

In November 2013, Many Strong Voices was voted by readers of The Guardian newspaper in Great Britain as one of the most influential climate change awareness raising campaigns in the world.

Read more on www.theguardian.com

“Many Strong Voices is a really powerful project. The voices of affected communities are, in general, absent from most climate change campaigning, but here, people who are affected by climate change speak for themselves about what it means to them.”

... A Guardian reader



A Centre Collaborating with UNEP

Cartography: Riccardo Pravettoni

Photography: 1 Christine Germano 1 Eneri Henry Reiher 4 Jaap Hart/iStock
8 Lawrence Hislop 9 Christine Germano 10 Laloni Samuelu Jr. 12 Rodney
Kajidrik 13 Lawrence Hislop 13 Teabee Tooma 14 Shenika Beazer
15 Christine Germano 16 Jenna Kilabuk 16 Andrew Alivaktuk 17 Salim Albert
17 Salim Albert 20 Theresa Olann 20 Folomanu Kulene

Many Strong Voices at a glance

Who we are

An alliance of people and organizations in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) collaborating to address the challenges of climate change.

What we do

Build capacity and alliances in the Arctic and SIDS to support the voices of people in these regions at the local, regional, and global levels.

Raise awareness about the effects of climate change on vulnerable regions in general, and the Arctic and SIDS in particular.

Work to understand regional needs and generate practical mitigation and adaptation solutions through innovative community-based research and knowledge exchange.

How to find us

MSV is coordinated by GRID-Arendal. Visit us at www.manystrongvoices.org or write to us at voices@grida.no. We're also on Facebook.

The Arctic and SIDS – Shared strengths, shared vulnerabilities

At first glance, the Arctic and Small Island Developing States appear to have little in common. Yet their societies share characteristics of vulnerability and strengths, and both of their environments are sensitive to climate change impacts.

Shared strengths include:

- A continuing, deeply rooted connection of the people to their environment
- A body of local and traditional knowledge that is incorporated to varying degrees into daily life and decision-making
- A history of resilience and a demonstrated ability to adapt to outside influences and perturbations over generations

Our primary objectives are clear: reduce global emissions to avoid catastrophic warming while recognizing common but differentiated responsibilities between countries; ensure adequate adaptation measures are taken in areas facing the adverse effects of climate change now and in the future; and include human rights protections in a final [climate change] agreement.

If we can achieve these goals, it will mark a watershed in humankind's ability to look beyond immediate and parochial interests and to reconnect as a shared humanity. It isn't that complicated. All it takes is for us to recognize our common interest and that we are all here on this planet together.

Sheila Watt-Clouthier and H.E. Ronald Jumeau¹

Shared vulnerabilities include:

- Reliance on economies based on fragile natural resources on land and at sea
- High unemployment and below average educational attainment
- Transportation and communication challenges
- Communities located in sensitive and remote coastal areas
- Limited markets, lack of local economic control, and over dependence on imports

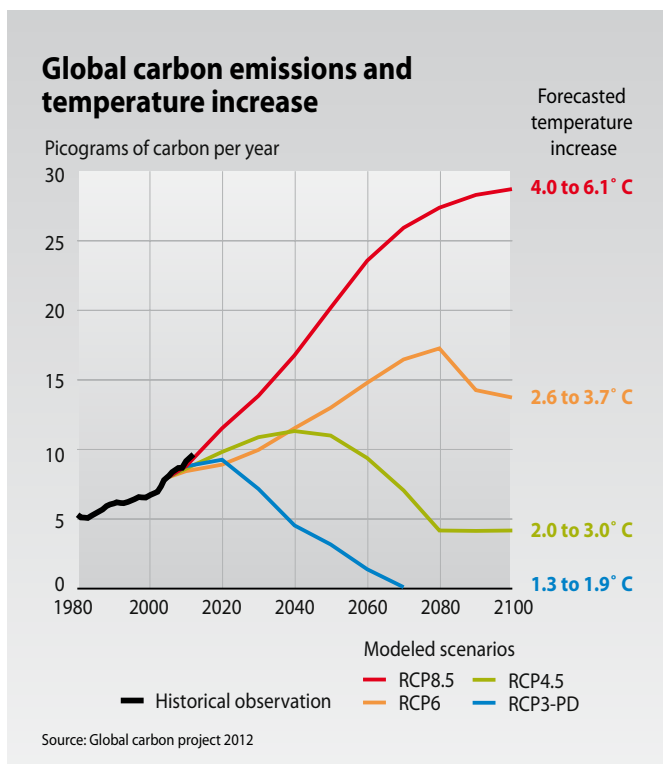
Although natural and human environments in the two regions differ markedly, the effects of climate change threaten the ecology, economies, and the social and cultural fabric of both regions posing serious challenges for their sustainable development. While communities in both regions have adapted to changing conditions in the past, climate change presents a new and formidable challenge.

No community with a sense of justice, compassion or respect for basic human rights should accept the current pattern of adaptation ... As climate change destroys livelihoods, displaces people and undermines entire social and economic systems, no country – however rich or powerful – will be immune to the consequences.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu²

Melting ice, rising seas – The challenge of climate change

The first decade of the 21st century was the warmest in both hemispheres since records on global surface temperatures became available in 1850.³ Above average temperatures were observed over most of the globe and particularly in the Arctic. The global average concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere continues to climb and hit 400 parts per million, an increase of 40% since the start of the Industrial Era (1750s).⁴ Warming temperatures lead to a host of other environmental changes.



The summer of 2012 saw the lowest amount of multi-year sea ice in the Arctic since satellite observations began.⁵ Although snow and ice conditions naturally vary from year to year, a long-term trend towards an ice free Arctic has emerged.⁶ In 2013, Arctic sea ice reached the sixth lowest extent since records began 30 years ago (5.1 million square kilometers). Although this is an increase from 2012 when the extent of sea ice dropped to 3.41 million square kilometres, the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center referred to this as a “temporary reprieve.”⁷



We inch along when it is great strides that are required.

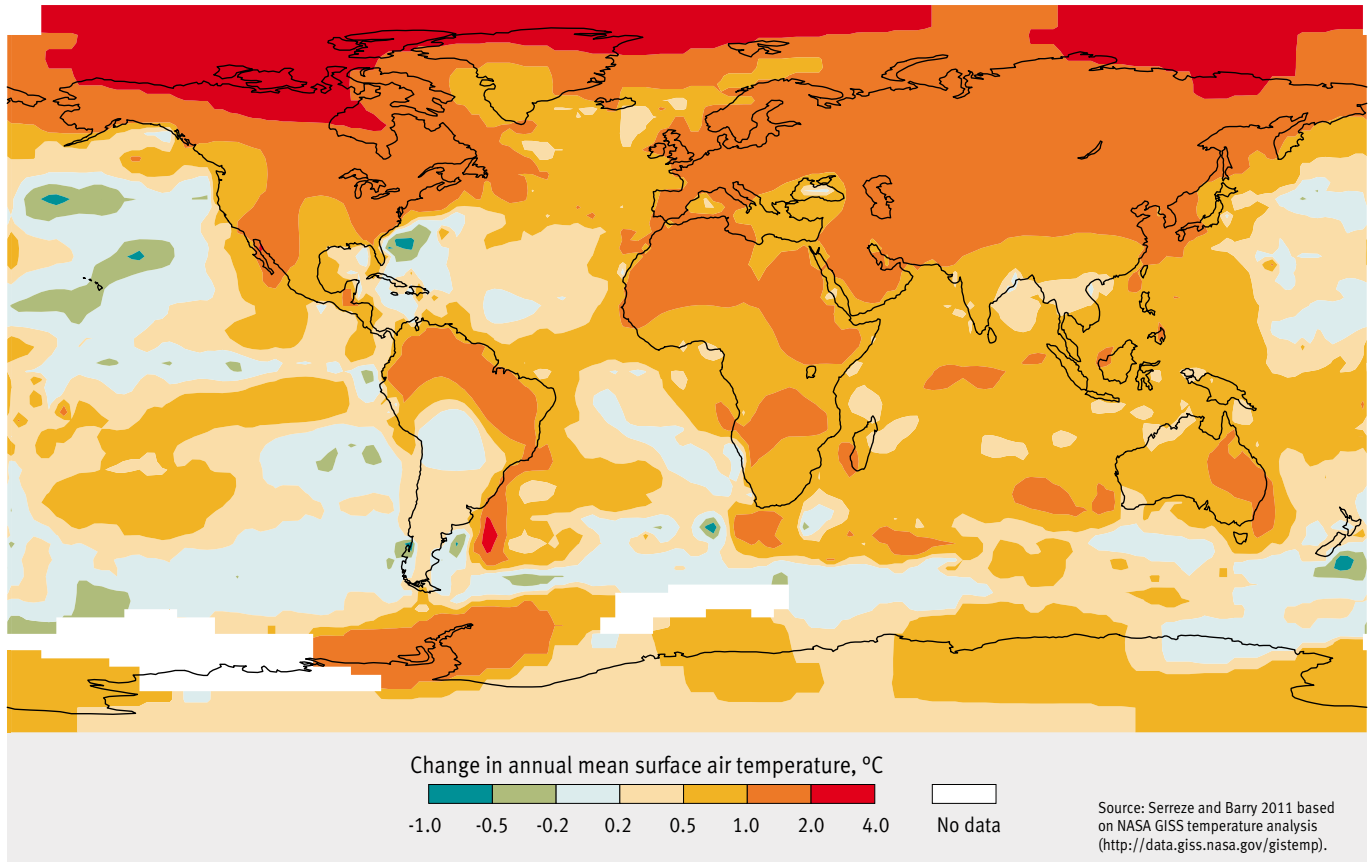
His Excellency Anote Tong,
President of the Republic of Kiribati⁸

More open water in the Arctic will absorb far more heat from the sun than it did when it was ice-covered further accelerating melting. A warming Arctic Ocean will have dramatic consequences for both Arctic and global ecosystems – and consequently for human society.

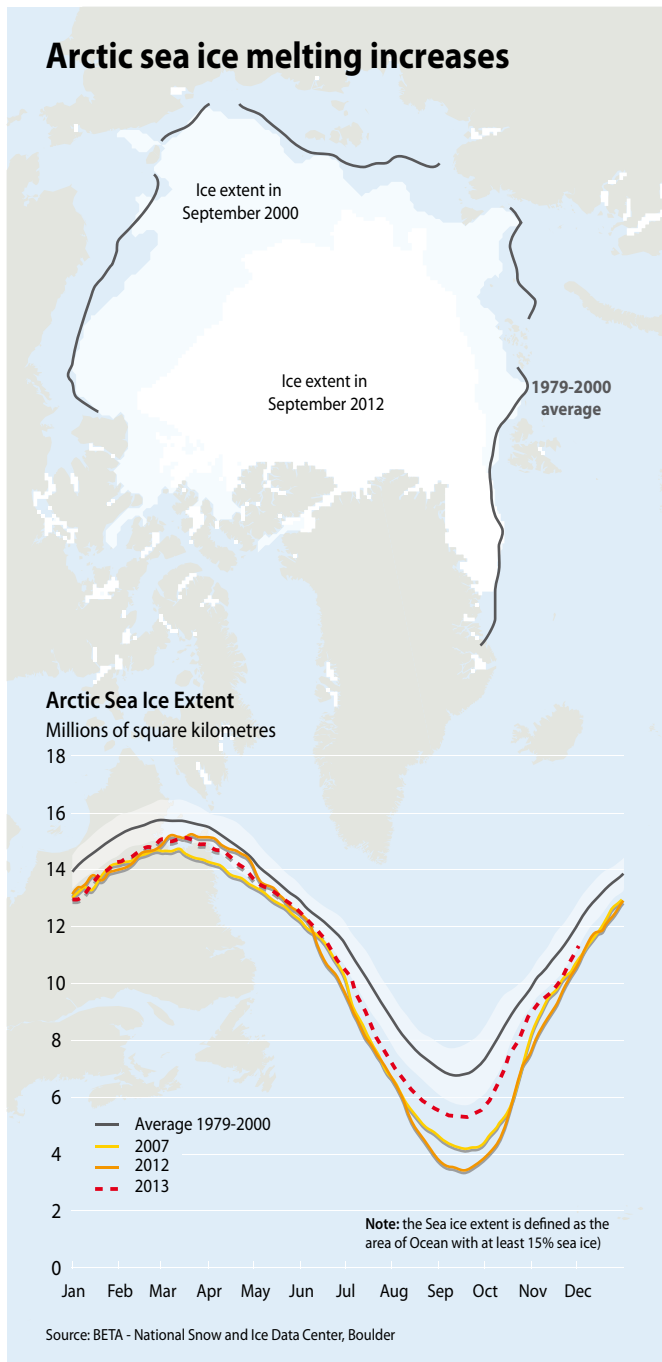
It is all changing much faster than our present abilities to model it.

Nalôn Koç,
Norwegian Polar Institute⁹

Melting ice from glaciers also poses problems and contributes directly to global sea level rise. Recent studies indicate that the Greenland ice sheet is melting five times faster than previously believed.¹⁰ This ice sheet, which on its own could raise sea levels by six metres if it melted



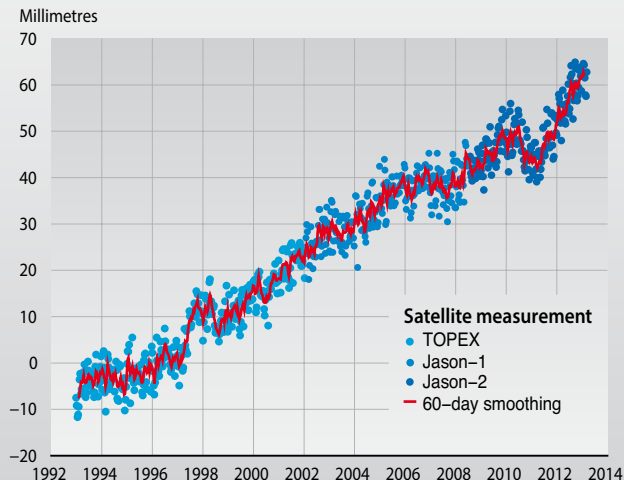
Arctic sea ice melting increases



completely, lost more than 290 km² in 2012 – significantly more than its average annual loss over the previous 11 years (132km²/yr).¹¹

Widespread melting of land-fast ice and thermal expansion of seawater from warming oceans are contributing to sea level rise. Between 2001–2010, global sea level rose about 3 mm per year, almost double the trend of 1.6 mm per year observed over the previous century.¹² A global rise in sea level of 60–100 cm is expected within the century and is expected to exacerbate flooding, storm surges, erosion, and other coastal hazards, and threaten vital infrastructure that supports the livelihood of island and coastal communities.¹³ Warmer oceans may also result in shifts of fish and marine mammal populations, and contribute to the decline of coral reefs.

Global mean sea level rise



Source: University of Colorado, 2013

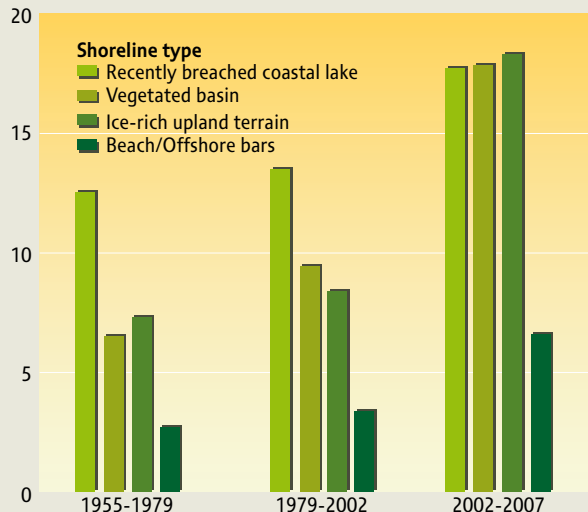
Impacts and challenges in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States

The impacts of climate change in the Arctic include reductions in the extent of sea ice, dramatic coastal erosion, and an increase in the depth of seasonal permafrost thawing. For Arctic human communities, the changes are affecting local food systems, human health, infrastructure, and indigenous ways of life. For some Arctic animal species, especially those dependent upon sea ice, rapid change could mean extinction.



**Mean annual coastal erosion in arctic Alaska
(Beaufort Sea shoreline)**

Metres per year



Source: Jones, B. M., et. al., 2009⁸

Arctic human communities are already responding to climate change but external and internal stressors are severely testing their ability to adapt. Despite the resilience shown historically by Arctic Indigenous Peoples, some traditional ways of life are being threatened and substantial investments are needed to adapt or relocate physical structures and communities.

I turned 20 yesterday – I don't know what kind of world I'm going to be living in in 20 years. If you don't do something, you will owe your grandchildren more apologies than you will be able to make.

Leehi Yona,
youth delegate from Canada at Doha COP18



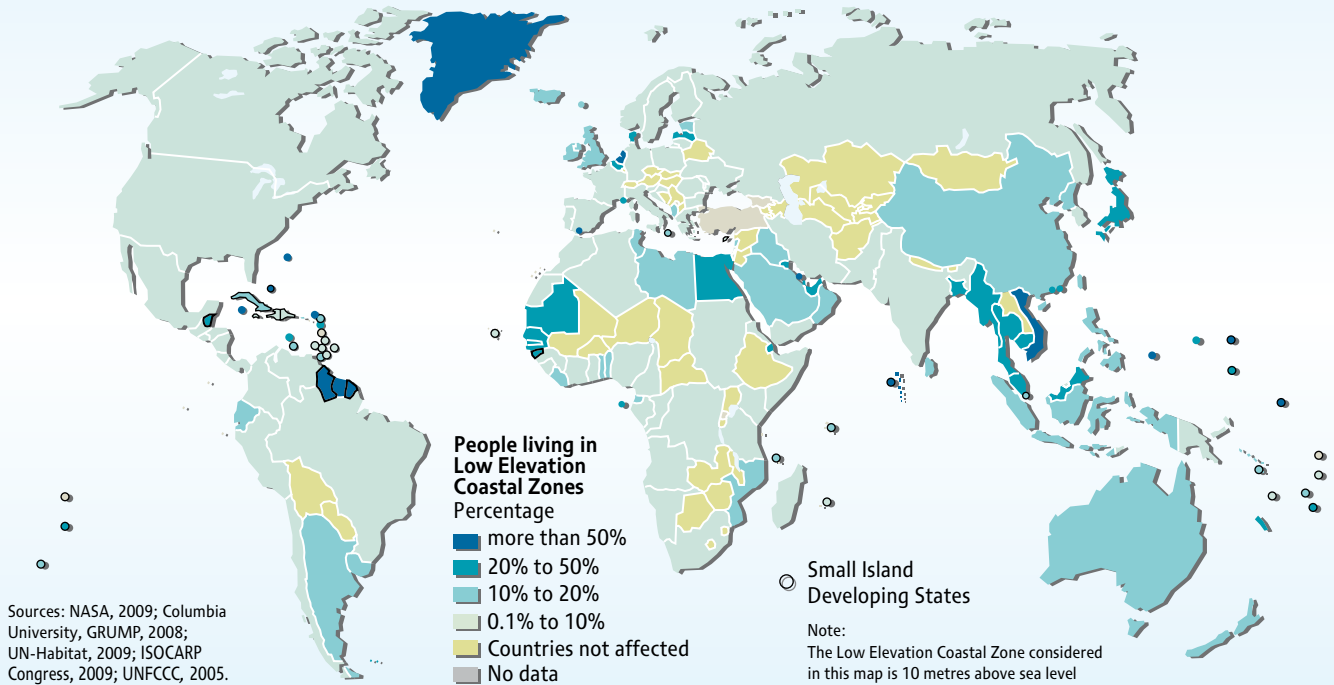
Small Island Developing States are expected to experience largely detrimental impacts from climate change. Rising sea levels will exacerbate flooding, storm surges, erosion, and other coastal hazards, threatening vital local infrastructure. Beach erosion and coral bleaching will reduce the value of fisheries and tourism both important economic activities for many SIDS. Furthermore, by 2050 the projected reduction in water resources is expected to pose severe threats to food security, sanitation, and health on many small islands.

People in the SIDS have developed a wide range of adaptive strategies to cope with annual and seasonal climate variability and extreme weather events such as tropical storms. However, islanders' traditional knowledge

for coping with environmental hazards is being lost at the same time as its value in developing adaptation strategies is increasingly recognized. Unlike large developed countries, the cost of adaptation relative to GDP is high in SIDS.

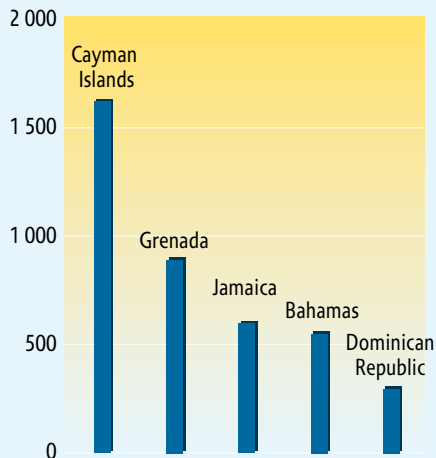


Coastal vulnerability and climate-related impacts



Economic Impact of Hurricanes

Million US dollars, 2004



Maldives today...



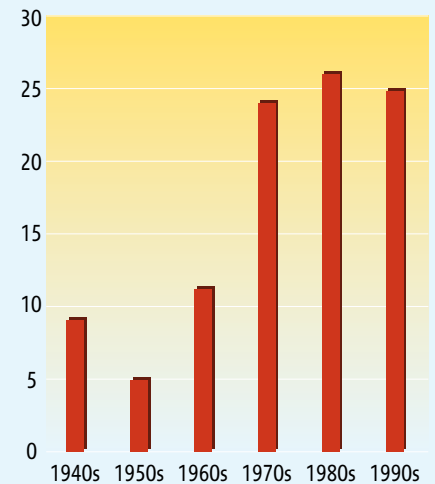
...and with 1 metre sea level rise



0 100
Kilometres

Trend of cyclone frequency in Vanuatu

Number of events per decade



The Encroaching Sea

by **Gilson Ishiquro**, student

"It's getting worse," says Kaminaga Kaminaga, the tiny nation's climate change coordinator.

The rising ocean raises questions too: What happens if the 61,000 Marshallese must abandon their low-lying atoll? Would they still be a nation? Would they still have a UN seat? Would they control of their old fisheries and their undersea minerals? Where would they live, and how would they make a living? Who, precisely, would they and their children become?

For years global negotiations to act on climate change have dragged on with little to show. Parties to the 193-nation

UN climate change treaty are meeting again in this year but no one expects decisive action to roll back the industrial, agriculture and transportation emission blamed for global warming and consequently for rising seas.

From 7,000 miles away, the people of the Marshall Islands just hope a conclusion will come one day.

These kinds of questions are very real for people in the Marshall Islands and other SIDS where relocation is being considered because their current homes may become uninhabitable.



The Many Strong Voices Programme (MSV)

Building on the inherent strengths of Arctic and SIDS communities, MSV partners are working together to design climate adaptation strategies and solutions, while sharing their stories with each other and the world.

Inuit and Islanders from developing states have reported the connection between Arctic sea ice melt and sea level rise and are working together through the “Many Strong Voices Programme” for solutions. The connection between the loss of sea ice and global events is increasingly evident.

Aqqaluk Lyng,
Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council¹⁴



1. Building capacity and alliances

While the Arctic and SIDS are experiencing the first and greatest effects of climate change, they also have the least capacity to influence international discussions and decisions on battling climate change – the most prominent being the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

That's why Many Strong Voices helps people in these regions take their message to international meetings to ask the world community for three things:

1. For a climate change agreement that keeps global average temperature increases as far below 1.5°C as possible in order to ensure their continued survival as peoples and nations
2. For countries to be open to learning from the experiences of the peoples of the Arctic and SIDS on adaptation and to assist these communities in building upon their traditional knowledge in this area
3. For the richest countries to help the vulnerable countries and regions to adapt to change by providing adequate financial and technical assistance

There is nothing. All the fish is gone. Where we used to fish everything has changed now. It is better to live in New Zealand because in Haapai the sea will take your house away. In Tonga we believe that everything is from nature, from God. You cannot always blame other countries for climate change. Now we have the means to deal with it. However we need assistance from richer countries.

Monitiveti Lauaki,
Tongan fisherman



2. Raising awareness – sharing our stories

To help create the political will to tackle climate change, there needs to be a broad understanding of the rapidly increasing human costs. MSV facilitates sustained collaboration between and within Arctic and SIDS regions, working to inform affected communities and regions about the impacts of climate change, and highlighting adaptation options and lessons to be learned from other parts of the world. But perhaps most importantly, MSV works to put a human face on climate change, helping partners in affected regions tell their stories, raise awareness, and push for action.



Portraits of Resilience

The Portraits of Resilience photography project allows young people in Arctic, Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific communities to document the changes they are seeing using words and photos. Their work has been displayed in major museums around the world, and has been featured during the United Nations climate change negotiations.

What was once land, is now just a pile of sand

Tuvalu consists of eight islands and many islets. Close to the capital of Funafuti there was one very special place, where people used to play and have fun and just relax under the sun. Its name is Tepukasavilivili. This islet was once full of trees and animals but over that past 30 years it has been swallowed up by the sea. Slowly eroding over that past few years, Tepukasavilivili has gone from a gem in the South Pacific, to a bare land where nothing grows. It is sad but also scary to think that Tuvalu might become a pile of sand. Just like Tepukasavilivili. But no matter what, I will stand by my country because I love Tuvalu and it will be my homeland forever.

– Riiti Conway, student

Auyuittuq – The Land that Never Melts is Melting

The Inuktitut word Auyuittuq means “the land that never melts.” In the past, the glaciers in the park melted at an average of one metre per year. This has been increasing and in the last year, they melted eight metres. Glaciers grow and shrink in response to changing climate. This is particularly true in our community of Pangnirtung [in the Canadian Arctic territory of Nunavut]. Melting glaciers will mean higher sea levels in all parts of the world, which is already happening in our northern communities. Climate change is a growing concern for Elders, youth, and all people living in the North. We need to ensure that our world leaders take action right now before it's too late, as we are already seeing changes to the land and to our Inuit way of life.

– Jenna Kilabuk, student



Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher's Fight with Climate Change

My island La Digue is the fourth largest island in Seychelles and it is the home for the endemic Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher known locally as Vev. My island is very beautiful and many tourists travel to my island paradise to see lovely white beaches, bike, enjoy a nice ride in the oxcart but more specially to see the endemic flycatchers. The male is all black and has a long tail and the female has a brown chestnut upper part, creamy white under parts and the head is black. It can be certain that climate change will limit the size of most bird population, including the flycatchers. Over the years the weather patterns have changed and the dry season is longer and persists for many months. All the marshes and wetlands dry up completely and there are no water resources available for the flycatchers to drink and bathe. The flycatchers depend a lot on freshwater marshes because they provide almost all feeding and nest sites. To help the birds a school club of 25 children, the "Friends of Flycatcher" (FOF), installed water baths around the community of La Digue. I am a proud member of the Friends of the Flycatcher club because I am passionate about the birds. I do activities to help protect the flycatcher, which is listed as a critically endangered species. The flycatchers' home will always be on my little island of La Digue.

– **Salim Albert**, student



3. Understanding needs, generating solutions

Research is a key pillar of MSV. Because the impacts of climate change will be location specific, MSV supports climate studies that combine scientific knowledge with traditional, local and indigenous knowledge bases.

A clear understanding of the constraints and opportunities for adaptation within Arctic and SIDS communities is needed in order to support the design, implementation, and monitoring of effective community adaptation strategies. In addition to producing studies and reports on ecosystem-based adaptation, food security, sustainable energy, and relocation, MSV conducts climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and brings vulnerable communities together to share information and supports advocacy efforts.

The people and organizations that make up Many Strong Voices are working to make sure their message is heard – and that action is taken.

Join us ...

To learn more or to be a part of Many Strong Voices, send an email to voices@grida.no. Visit www.manystrongvoices.org or like us on Facebook.



Notes

1. Watt-Cloutier, S. and H.E. Ronald Jumeau. 2012. “We Need Many Strong, United Voices to Combat Climate Change” in IISD Guest article #75, April 2nd 2012, available at <http://climate-1.iisd.org/guest-articles/we-need-many-strongunited-voices-to-combat-climate-change/>
2. United Nations Development Programme, 2007, Human Development Report 2007 / 2008 – Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World, ed. Palgrave Macmillan.
3. WMO. 2013. The Global Climate 2001-2010: A Decade of Climate Extremes. WMO-No. 1103. World Meteorological Organization. Geneva, available at http://library.wmo.int/opac/index.php?lvl=notice_display& (accessed 10 July 2013).
4. Dr. Pieter Tans, NOAA/ESRL (www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/) and Dr. Ralph Keeling, Scripps Institution of Oceanography (<http://scrippsco2.ucsd.edu>)
5. Perovich, D.K., W. Meier, M. Tschudi, S. Gerland, and J. Richter-Menge, 2013: [The Arctic] Sea ice cover [in “State of the Climate in 2012”]. Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society (BAMS), S126-S127.
6. National Snow and Ice Data Center, Sea Ice Index available at http://nsidc.org/data/seice_index
7. National Snow and Ice Data Centre website, http://nsidc.org/news/press/2013_arcticseaiceminimum_PR.html (accessed 1 October 2013).
8. Address by His Excellency Anote Tong, President of the Republic of Kiribati, at the General Debate of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly available at http://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/67/KI_en.pdf
9. Nalân Koç, Norwegian Polar Institute, quoted by Christi Turner 2013, “Summer sea ice cover is smaller, younger, thinner” in Barents Observer, available at <http://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2013/07/summer-sea-ice-cover-smaller-younger-thinner-02-07> (accessed 5 July 2013).
10. WMO 2013. The Global Climate 2001-2010: A Decade of Climate Extremes. WMO-No. 1103, available at http://library.wmo.int/pmb_ged/wmo_1103_en.pdf (accessed 10 July 2013).
11. Greenland Ice Sheet. 2012. J.E. Box, J. Cappelen, C. Chen, D. Decker, X. Fettweis, E. Hanna, N.T. Knudsen, T. Mote, K. Steffen, M. Tedesco, R.S.W. van de Wal, J. Wahr. Arctic Report Card: Update for 2012. http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/reportcard/greenland_ice_sheet.html (accessed 17 December 2012).
12. WMO 2013. The Global Climate 2001-2010: A Decade of Climate Extremes. WMO-No. 1103, available at http://library.wmo.int/pmb_ged/wmo_1103_en.pdf (accessed 10 July 2013). (accessed 10 July 2013).
13. Nicholls, R.J., P.P. Wong, V.R. Burkett, J.O. Codignotto, J.E. Hay, R.F. McLean, S. Ragoonaden and C.D. Woodroffe, 2007: Coastal systems and low-lying areas. Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson, Eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 322-336.
14. Inuit Call on Global Leaders at UNFCCC COP 18 in Doha, Qatar: Making the most of the 2013 – 2015 review and the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, Statement to the UNFCCC COP 18, Doha Qatar, Nuuk 5 Dec. 2012, available at <http://www.iccalaska.org/servlet/content/72.html>
15. Spiegel Online International, Ban Ki-Moon Warns of Climate Change ‘Oblivion’ (Dec. 12, 2007), available at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/stark-words-at-bali-conference-ban-ki-moon-warns-of-climate-change-oblivion-a-522929.html> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008).

The moral challenge of our generation ... the situation is so desperately serious that any delay could push us past the tipping point, beyond which the ecological, financial, and human costs would increase dramatically.

Ban Ki Moon,
UN Secretary General¹⁵



For more information on the
Many Strong Voices programme,
visit www.manystrongvoices.org
or write to voices@grida.no

Many
Strong
Voices **MSV**
Arctic • Small Islands Developing States

