

**UNDERWATER SOVEREIGNTY:
THE IMPORTANCE OF CLIMATE LEADERSHIP FOR THE REPUBLIC OF
MALDIVES**

by

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Abstract

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) leadership highlights the implications of global climate change upon national and international security frameworks. As chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) for four consecutive years, the Maldives aims to tackle the challenges of climate change by implementing climate related national and international strategies, targets and policies. This paper focuses on why the Maldives prioritizes climate leadership as one of its main political goals. I argue that the nation prioritizes climate leadership in order to gain soft power within the international community; to build developmental assistance for the nation; to promote tourism by crafting an international image of a nation committed to eradicating climate change; to reduce the existential social, political and economic threats caused by climate change that would otherwise destabilize the nation and threaten the existing political leadership; and lastly, as a symbol of green leadership in the world. The Maldivian climate leadership strives to become a source of inspiration and a model for other nations to follow suit. The findings of this paper promote a deeper understanding of Maldivian climate politics, the understanding of climate leadership in the Maldives via agenda framing, political networks, rhetoric and state-crafted bargaining in order to safeguard their national sovereignty and re-define the parameters of global climate leadership.

Lay Summary

When the Republic of Maldives made headlines in 2009 for holding a cabinet meeting underwater to signify the future disappearance of the small island nation, the need to do something grew stronger in the international community. The urgency to counteract climate change offered the Maldives a significant platform in the international community – whereby, countries agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide the nation with economic assistance. Why is prioritizing global climate leadership significant for the Maldives? Small island states, such as the Maldives, prioritize global climate leadership in order to achieve their political goals via soft power. This paper analyzes the nation’s priority to attain international advocacy and argues that the Maldives asserts climate leadership to earn humanitarian assistance and economically develop via collaborative international endeavors. The Maldives attempts to promote a positive international image of itself, as well as protect itself from the threats of climate change via political networks, state-crafted bargaining and rhetoric to safeguard the national sovereignty of the small island nation.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished work of the author, Aliya Hai.

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List of Abbreviations

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
COP	Conference of Parties
CO2	Carbon dioxide
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GHGS	Green House Gasses
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNFCCC	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Section 1: Introduction

The Maldives is one of the small states. We are not in a position to change the course of events in the world. But what you do or do not do here (COP 3, Kyoto Japan) will greatly influence the fate of my people. It can also change the course of world history.

H.E Maumnoon Abdul Gayoom—¹ UNFCCC, 2005.

The Republic of Maldives is a Small Island Developing State, located within the Indian Ocean. It is a country made up of 1,192 small coral islands, luxurious resorts, white sands and crystal clear waters – a tourist’s paradise. As a result, tourism is the largest industry in the country. Tourism earned the Maldives US\$ 1364.6 million in 2016, which was 40.9 % of country’s total GDP that year; this is expected to rise to more than 44 % of the country’s GDP by 2027.² The Maldives consists of greater sea mass than land, and hence, rising sea levels pose an existential threat to the small island nation. With the projected increase in sea levels of “10 to 100 cm per year by the year 2100,” it is predicted that the entire country could be “submerged.”³ Therefore, one of the main aims of governance and leadership within the country is to alleviate the impacts of climate change, as well as prioritize climate leadership and gain soft power. This paper focuses on climate leadership within the Republic of Maldives.

I argue that international climate leadership allows the Maldives to gain soft power within the international community; to build developmental assistance via foreign humanitarian

¹ Germany, UNFCCC, *Climate Change Small Island Developing States*, 2005, accessed March 18, 2018, https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/cc_sids.pdf

² *The Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism*, March 2017, accessed March 10, 2018, <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2017/maldives2017.pdf>, 3.

³ The World Bank, 2010, accessed February 18, 2018, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2010/04/06/climate-change-in-the-maldives>

aid and investments for economic growth; to promote tourism by crafting a positive international image of the nation in the world; and finally, to counteract the existential social, political and economic threats of global climate change that would otherwise destabilize the nation and threaten the existing political leadership. Thus, the central question this paper attempts to answer is: why does the Republic of Maldives prioritize climate leadership?

With the use of Maldivian national documents regarding its frameworks and agenda setting, speeches of local and international political actors and official documents from the United Nations Conferences, this paper will highlight the existential economic, political and social security threats of climate change and the need for economic development and foreign assistance to safeguard the Maldivian national sovereignty via soft power and climate leadership. I argue that the Maldives assumes climate leadership in order to lower carbon emissions and to seek international assistance in coping with climate related security threats, as well as earn foreign investment and aid to expand and diversify its economy. Soft power is often crucial for a nation that lacks significant hard power. Thus, climate leadership helps the nation frame their narrative and draw in international support through political networks, climate agenda framing and state-crafted bargaining to achieve their national political goals.

This paper consists of nine sections. The first section defines soft power and the leadership ideology of the Maldives. The second section illustrates the importance of setting and framing a political agenda within the international community and its impact upon climate negotiations. The third section outlines the goals of climate leadership for the nation, in terms of the environment. The fourth section highlights climate change as an international security threat. The fifth section examines the economic, political and social threats of climate change upon the security of the nation. The sixth section explains the nation's dependency and need for foreign

aid. The seventh section asserts the importance of tackling environmental challenges and defines the goals of climate leadership, in terms of international assistance. The eighth section considers future improvements for climate leadership and the need for capacity building within the country. The ninth section reasserts the main argument and concludes the paper with insights for understanding global climate leadership.

Section 2: Soft Power and Leadership

Traditionally, power has been considered to be military “strength in war”; however, the definition of power today has shifted away from the complete reliance on “military force.”⁴ This shift in the conception of power indicates that power is not solely reliant upon resources anymore, but rather, it is the “ability to change the behavior of states.”⁵ Due to the complex nature of politics, national security has become increasingly complicated and “military” threats have shifted toward “economical and ecological” fronts.⁶ Today, the use of force is costly for most nations, and as a result, “communications,” “organizational and institutional skills,” and “manipulation of interdependence” have become far more important.⁷ With this shift in the conception of power, “strategies” to yield power have also evolved and the “ecological” and “economic” issues of today require the achievement of a “mutual advantage,” that can only be reached by state “co-operation.”⁸ Many of the great powers today are unable to use the same military advantages that they had once used, and as a result, “small states” and “private actors” have become “more powerful.”⁹ Power has become diffused with the increase in “economic independence,” the prevalent role of “transnational actors,” the growth of “nationalism in weak states,” the “spread of technology,” and the “changing political issues” within our world.¹⁰

Thus, small nations often attempt to attain “soft co-optive power” to gain leverage within international politics.¹¹ When states are able to make their power appear “legitimate in the eyes

⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy* 80 (1990), 1990, accessed March 15, 2019, doi:10.2307/1148580, 154.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

of others,” they tend to “encounter less resistance” to their “wishes,” and, if an “ideology” is favorable other nations “willingly follow –” thus, nations strive to achieve their national goals with the use of soft power.¹² Co-optive power is power that is yielded when a nation frames an issue “so that other countries develop preferences” in a manner “consistent with their own.”¹³

2.1 Climate Leadership Ideology

The Government of Maldives pledges to take its “future into its own hands” and aims to attain “climate leadership” with “strong political commitment” in the “highest levels of government,” as well as, alongside “non-governmental partners.”¹⁴ The nation believes that “international cooperation is essential” in abating the threats of climate change and that the negligence of the global sphere to “radically cut emissions,” and cooperate can “jeopardize” their national autonomy goals in terms of, “development and survivability.”¹⁵ Thus, the Maldives is prepared to form ties with their “global partners” to safeguard the sovereignty of their nation.¹⁶ The Maldives employs a compelling narrative to frame and contend their climate related agenda within the international community to gain international cooperation and support.

In “1989” the Republic of Maldives took the initiative to hold the first “Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise” in the capital city of Malé – an important conference that set the parameters for future climate negotiations, and in fact, many of the “declarations” from that conference “remain relevant today.”¹⁷ Maldives is one of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – SIDS are states that have formed an alliance via the United Nations to “tackle

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Environment, *Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework*, n.d, Draft 3, 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷ Ibid., 134.

sustainability challenges.”¹⁸ Although SIDS face numerous challenges, there has been a “limited support” and “interest” from “external sources” in the past to assist these nations.¹⁹ Therefore, due to the security threats posed by climate change, it is important for the Maldives to assume the position of a global climate leader and attain soft power to safeguard its national sovereignty, economic potential, as well as, become a symbol of green leadership in the world.

Humanitarian assistance and foreign aid boosts the national economy and equips the nation to effectively overcome climatic threats from which migration is the most plausible outcome. Migration, a “strong possibility” for the Maldives, would “require negotiations with other countries, how they should resettle, and on what terms.”²⁰ The first democratically elected President of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, assumed power from, 2008 until 2012. Nasheed proclaimed that he was “seeking to buy a new homeland to save his people,” transforming the Maldives into a “moral leader” within “UN Climate talks,” as well as, coaxing “rich countries to act.”²¹ Furthermore, he declared his goal in office, to fund the acquisition of land to “resettle migrants –” thus, the Maldives conceived the artificial “island of Hulhumalé,” to erect “homes and a community” for its people.²² Climate leadership is an asset for the Maldives to be able to negotiate the “costs and feasibility” of “different propositions,” whilst navigating through “international law.”²³ In October 2009, Nasheed garnered world attention by initiating a “cabinet meeting underwater” whereby members were “certified for scuba diving” and utilized “white boards” and “hand signals” to communicate “underwater for 30 minutes,”

¹⁸ Ilan Kelman, "Difficult Decisions: Migration from Small Island Developing States under Climate Change," April 8, 2015, accessed March 8, 2018, doi:10.1002/2014EF000278, 133.

¹⁹ Ibid., 133.

²⁰ Ibid., 134.

²¹ John Vidal, "Maldives Switches From Climate Threat to Mass Tourism," March 5, 2017, accessed February 30, 2018, <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/maldives-climate-threat-to-mass-tourism-21217>.

²² Ibid., 136.

²³ Ibid., 138.

leading to nations agreeing to “cut global emissions.”²⁴ Whether a “stunt,” or a “symbol” of the Maldives impending demise, it endowed the nation with significant attention and pushed for the creation of the first ever, “Climate Vulnerable Forum.”²⁵ The Maldives not only won notable recognition and sympathy from the world for highlighting its deteriorating climate, but also, elucidated the need for swift action and compensation towards it.

The Maldives has assumed the head leadership position within the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), as chair for four consecutive years. This alliance works as an “ad hoc lobby and negotiating voice” for the Small Island Developing States.²⁶ The coalition functions “out of the chairman’s Mission to the United Nations” and signifies the Maldives as the universal leader in the battle against climate change.²⁷ A UNDP administrator, Achim Steiner, commends the “impressive leadership” of the SIDS which has forced “countries to rethink their objectives” and “raise their ambitions;” asserting that the SID nations have matched their international leadership at the “country level,” with “firsthand commitment and action” via “community” and, at the “national level.”²⁸

²⁴ The World Bank, 2010.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Alliance of Small Island States, *About AOSIS*, accessed March 20, 2018, <http://aosis.org/about/>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ United Nations Development Programme, Remarks at UNGA Event 2017 on ‘Small Island Developing States Responding to Climate Impacts and Planning for a Sustainable Future. Leadership, Innovation and Partnership’, by Achim Steiner, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2017/09/18/achim-steiner-undp-administrator-remarks-at-unga-event-2017-on-small-island-developing-states-responding-to-climate-impacts-and-planning-for-a-sustainable-future-leadership-innovation-and-partnership-.html>.

Section 3: Climate Leadership Agenda Setting and Framing

The question as to whether small island nations like the Maldives are capable of influencing the political agenda in the modern world is frequently contested. It has been concluded that, “small states do have influence on the international agenda,” and, that they harness this influence via “strategic framing,” by which they “enhance their networks” through “alliances and advocacy networks.”²⁹ The Maldives is a SID nation that follows the process of “framing” their agenda to the world, which is critical, since small states cannot “influence others” via “harder means” of power.³⁰ Thus, framing their agenda relates to the “how” and “who” of setting their agenda via the aid of “political leaders,” “diplomats” and “(conference) negotiators.”³¹ The Maldives, as a small nation, adequately frames their agenda with the aid of “indirect paths,” “advocacy networks,” and “global media,” which aids to “shape the agenda directly” or “by leveraging the broader population.”³²

Based on this framework, one can formulate propositions about small states in the agenda-setting process. The main proposition is:

Proposition 1: Small states can and do have influence on the international agenda.

Furthermore, the following sub-propositions can be drawn:

Proposition 2: Lacking traditional means of power, small states mainly use strategic framing to generate influence.

Proposition 3: Small states make use of other actors and institutions, particularly alliances, advocacy networks and the media, to enhance their influence.³³

²⁹ Kevin Jaschik, "Small States and International Politics: Climate Change, the Maldives and Tuvalu," *International Politics* 51 (March 2014), accessed January 2019, doi:10.1057/ip.2014.5, 272.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 277.

3.1 Political Negotiation

The Maldives frames the issue of climate threats by “using the credibility of science and its indicators,” which aim to “translate it into the message.”³⁴ The leaders frequently imply “moral” “language” to add to the “dramatic effect,” “focusing” on “events and symbols” and “strategic framing,” increasing their “international credibility” and salience within the international community.³⁵ The “SIDS formed AOSIS” to gain “representation” and a greater voice on matters of environmental policy.³⁶ The capacity to link “actors with similar ideas” promotes “cooperation,” “progressive discussions” and “mutually beneficial relationships” where by, “advocacy networks” and “NGOs support SIDS” via “legal and technical expertise”.³⁷

Consequently, the Maldives has a “direct and indirect influence” on “climate change negotiations,” and, on the “broader international agenda.”³⁸ SIDS nations do not as such imply “moral and normative claims and arguments as a legitimacy of structural, entrepreneurial, or intellectual leadership, but turn morality into their main asset and core leadership strategy.”³⁹ SIDS often utilize “morality to build coalitions and support, and to delegitimize and shame other states with different discourses, positions and interests.”⁴⁰ Negotiations require “structural power” and SIDS, with “hardly any structural power” manage to “take quite some room of maneuver in getting their agenda debated” by implementing “various leadership strategies” in the

³⁴ Ibid., 278.

³⁵ Ibid., 279.

³⁶ Ibid., 284.

³⁷ Ibid., 285.

³⁸ Ibid., 286.

³⁹ Ine’s De A’ Gueda Corneloup and Arthur P. J., Mol, “Small Island Developing States and International Climate Change Negotiations: The Power of Moral “leadership,” ” *Int Environ Agreements* 14 (November 2013), November 9, 2013, accessed January 18, 2019, doi:10.1007/s10784-013-9227-0, 292.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

fight against climate change that influence “negotiation outcomes.”⁴¹ Thus, this “moral leadership strategy” gave the SIDS “most leverage” in “negotiations” and did manage to attract a “broad coalition.”⁴² For instance, AOSIS achieved “the inclusion of some points of their agenda in the Copenhagen Accord” in terms of a “1.5 C” within “the last paragraph of the text;” they were also “included” in the access for adaptation finance” and “the Green Climate fund.”⁴³

Thus, climate leadership is key for the Maldives, as, “within a frame of structural disadvantage of SIDS,” these are “considerable achievements” realized by granting them recognition on an international platform.⁴⁴ Climate leadership is explicitly listed as the nations principal goal in its environmental policy, since the “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)” states that the Maldives will “be hit first and hardest by global climate change.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ibid., 293.

⁴² Ibid., 294.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Environment, *Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework*, Draft 3, n.d, 3.

Section 4: Climate Leadership Goals

The Maldives National Climate Change Policy Framework states that the nation's objective is to align its focus toward "leading advocacy" whilst negotiating the climate."⁴⁶ The climate policy urges to: i) "promote the Maldives as a leader amongst SIDS with a coordinated and cohesive national policy," ii) "to ensure that the Maldives is well represented at international climate/sustainable development negotiations towards achieving maximum benefit for the country" and, to iii) "promote a coordinated and cohesive national policy at the international level."⁴⁷ In essence, this will permit the country to communicate effectively to the world, and create awareness on the diverse security threats of climate change, as well as, allow for national leaders to "develop appropriate training tools" on climate change.⁴⁸ The nation strategizes itself to seize leadership roles to "represent the Maldives at the international arena" via a "climate change Ambassador," a "Maldives Chief Negotiator" and, by enhancing the nation's "participation at various International climate negotiations such as, UNFCCC," with "lead roles from the Maldives" in these "climate negotiations."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 18.

4.1 Climate Leadership and Environmental Goals

Upholding climate leadership empowers the nation to pursue their national agenda, as well as develop and implement significant national and international policies against climate change. The Government of the Maldives recognizes the significance of climate leadership to alleviate the threats of climate change, and, to “address short medium and long-term effects” of the issue, in “a coordinated, holistic and participatory manner –” but also, to improve the “quality of lives” of locals, by not compromising on the “opportunities for sustainable development.”⁵⁰ Climate leadership on an international platform will minimize security threats by promoting “a coordinated approach amongst all national stakeholders.”⁵¹ In turn, this will “strengthen the capacity” of the small island nation, as well as, reduce the “loss of land, life, economic disruption and damage to the environment and property.”⁵² More so, it will “alleviate poverty in vulnerable groups and islands.”⁵³ Essentially, this strengthened capacity of the nation will, “build existing policies, plans and institutional structures,” as well as, be “incorporated into every sector’s development and implementation plans” in the country.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid., 10

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Section 5: Climate Change and International Security

Global warming, an imminent threat to the well-being and safety of our planet, has caused sea levels to rise by “7 inches in the last 100 years.”⁵⁵ This is far greater than the “previous 200 years combined,” greatly threatening the lives of individuals residing in coastal areas.⁵⁶ A “million species have become extinct,” and there has been a rise in the number of frequent “droughts,” “hurricanes,” “wildfires,” “melting of polar ice caps” and “storms,” due to the rise in global temperatures.⁵⁷ Global warming is the average increase in global temperatures of the earth’s atmosphere due to the release of greenhouse gases (e.g. methane, carbon dioxide or chlorofluorocarbons) that absorb solar radiation and heat up the earth’s surface.

The concept of security is closely linked to climate change. Security is defined as the “military and diplomatic measures” that “nations and international organizations” undertake to “ensure mutual safety and security.”⁵⁸ The prevalence of security protects the sanctity of human life, promotes and respects the dignity of humans and allows human beings to flourish.

Organizations such as the United Nations that promote international security, do so, in order to “maintain international peace and security,” promote “friendly relations among nations” foster “international co-operation,” in solving “international problems” of an “economic,” “social,” “cultural” or “humanitarian character,” and become a “center for harmonizing the actions of nations” in uniting individuals and nations toward common goals of peace and security.⁵⁹

Climate change will significantly affect the security of our planet, as increased climatic disasters

⁵⁵ Rinkesh, "35 Surprising Facts About Global Warming," accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/various-global-warming-facts.php>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Global Security, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.rand.org/topics/global-security.html>.

⁵⁹ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, , accessed February 15, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>.

will instigate “national and regional instability,” which would in turn, lead to “military confrontations,” and “transnational crimes.”⁶⁰ More so, “rising temperatures, droughts and floods” and the “acidity of ocean waters,” will further affect the already “limited food supply” and “lead to waves of migration” that would threaten “international stability” and result in “violent clashes.”⁶¹

Climate change is often perceived as a “threat multiplier” which increases the “existing trends, tensions and instability” in countries.⁶² Furthermore, climate change leads to “conflict over resources” causing a depletion of natural resources as well as, “economic losses.”⁶³ The economic losses are estimated to cause the global economy, “20 % of Global GDP per year,” as well as, affecting coastal zones which consist of “one fifth of the world’s population –” threatening these regions and their “economic prospects.”⁶⁴ Moreover, climate change will significantly reduce landmass due to “receding coastlines” and the “submergence of large areas –” specially affecting “small island states” and, causing disputes over “land and maritime borders,” as well as, inducing “migration and conflicts over territory.”⁶⁵ The United Nations estimates “millions of environmental migrants” by “2020,” which in turn, would cause “instability in weak and failing states,” leading to “ethnic and religious tensions,” “political radicalization” and the destabilization of “countries,” and “entire regions.”⁶⁶ The threats of climate change can be extreme depending on the region. For instance, in South Asia, where “40

⁶⁰ Janet Sawin, "Global Security Brief #3: Climate Change Poses Greater Security Threat than Terrorism," 2005, accessed February 17, 2018, <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/77>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² European Commission, *Climate Change and International Security*, March 14, 2008, , accessed February 17, 2018, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30862/en_clim_change_low.pdf, 3.

⁶³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7.

%,” or “almost 2 billion lives” live only “60 km” from the “coastline,” it will make it hard for the population to be fed and protected from “infectious diseases.”⁶⁷ More so, “conflicts” over “resources” and “unmanaged migration” will further exacerbate instability within the region.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Section 6: Climate Change Threats

The Maldives is also a nation that consists of many islands with “live coral reefs,” and “sandbars” located in the Indian Ocean.⁶⁹ The Maldives is situated at the equator and hence, receives large amounts of daily sunshine, as well as, torrential downpours. However, due to climate change, the temperature in the “Indian Ocean” is projected to increase by “2.1 degrees” in the “2050’s.”⁷⁰ The population in the “low lying” island is widely dispersed, at the same time; it boasts the “seventh largest reef system in the world” which tourists use to snorkel, as well as, a varied richness in “species diversity.”⁷¹ There is a positive correlation between healthy coral reefs and increased rates of tourism in the country. Due to the effects of climate change, sea levels are estimated to rise by “0.09m to 0.88m from 1990 to 2100,” and since, “three-quarters of the land area of Maldives is less than one meter above mean sea level” it causes an exponential threat to the “life and livelihoods” of people in the nation.”⁷² Rising sea levels will produce “storm surges,” “erosion” and “other coastal hazards,” making it vulnerable “to inundation” and “beach erosion.”⁷³

With the rise in sea levels and high tides, there would be an increased risk of “saltwater intrusion into the freshwater” contaminating the potable water.⁷⁴ In fact, it is estimated that the entire nation will be “submerged” by the year “2100,” and severe “beach erosion” will take

⁶⁹ P.K Das, "Climate Change and Education," March 2010, accessed March 17, 2018, https://www.preventionweb.net/files/16354_climatechangeedmaldives.pdf, 24.

⁷⁰ United Nations, *Response Paper to the Security Implications of Climate Change Draft Report*, July 18, 2009, accessed February 20, 2018, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/ga-64/cc-inputs/Maldives_CCIS.pdf.

⁷¹ P.K Das, "Climate Change and Education," 2010, 27.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ United Nations, *Response Paper to the Security Implications of Climate Change Draft Report*, 2009.

place on “97 %” of its islands.”⁷⁵ Coral bleaching occurs when algae are lost of the corals – resultantly, becoming “pale in colour” and bleaching due to the rising ocean temperatures.⁷⁶ Coral reefs in the Maldives not only promote tourism and bring in revenues for the nation, but also, are hosts to “rich marine biological diversity.”⁷⁷ There is, in fact, evidence from the “Maldives,” that “warming of the ocean surface” leads to “coral bleaching” in the “islands.”⁷⁸ Resulting from the environmental threats of global warming, our entire ecosystem could be affected due to the decline in species diversity caused by ocean acidification. Only a few species will be able to escape the consequences of the “increasing CO₂,” reducing the number of key “species” on the planet, thus, food chains will be disrupted, causing a lack of “food for animals higher up the food chain.”⁷⁹ Essentially, this will lead to a “decrease in the overall ecosystem health,” affecting the entire planet, as oceans will not be able to adequately control the “Earth’s heat exchange” rate – further insinuating the vicious cycle of climate change.⁸⁰ Thus, it is critical to mitigate the effects of climate change in the Maldives via regional and international cooperation.

As a moral leader against climate change, the Maldives frequently raises “awareness” of the “disasters” impending upon its nation, and the “world,” so that it can procure “attention” on the distresses of this “tiny island nation.”⁸¹ Due to the Maldives’s pledged leadership to counter climate change, numerous international organizations have provided the nation with

⁷⁵ P.K Das, "Climate Change and Education," 2010, 28.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁷ United Nations, *Response Paper to the Security Implications of Climate Change Draft Report*, 2009.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Emily Tripp, *Climate Change Leads to Food Chain Collapse*, 2015, accessed April 1, 2018, <http://marinesciencetoday.com/2015/10/21/climate-change-food-chain-collapse/>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The World Bank, 2010, April 6 2010, accessed February 18, 2018, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2010/04/06/climate-change-in-the-maldives>

developmental assistance to strengthen its national capacity and build resilience against climate change. An example of international aid directed towards the nation is the “tripartite Memorandum of Understanding” between the Maldives, European Union (EU) and The World Bank Group – whereby, the EU contributed a sum of US “\$8.8 million,” to the Maldives in order to carry out “priority projects” vis-à-vis “climate change adaptation and mitigation.”⁸²

⁸² Ibid.

6.1 Economic, Political and Social

The Maldives “contributes less than 0.01 % to global emissions of GHGs,” yet; it is “one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change.”⁸³ The economy of the nation thrives mainly upon tourism and fisheries.⁸⁴ Tourism is the nation’s greatest “foreign currency earner,” and the main “source of employment” in the country.⁸⁵ Thus, the economy depends upon favorable weather conditions related to the health of “sea and coral reefs.”⁸⁶ In 1972, tourism in the Maldives, accounted for “1,097” visitors, and in 2000, accounted for, “467,155” visitors.⁸⁷ Tourists spent a large sum of “US\$2 billion” in the Maldives in 2013.⁸⁸ In terms of employment, the tourism industry of the Maldives provided “43.6 % of total employment” in the country in 2016, which is expected to rise by “49.2 %” in 2027.⁸⁹ The Maldives is also one of the main exporters of fisheries, especially; “canned fish –” and many locals depend upon “tuna,” as a “protein” source in their diets.⁹⁰ The livelihood of many of the “communities in the atolls” depends upon income from “fisheries.”⁹¹ In 2013, the island nation witnessed the

⁸³ Republic of Maldives, *First National Communication of The Republic of Maldives to The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 2001, accessed February 30, 2018, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/maldnc1.pdf>, 5.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 31

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Heather Hosterman and Joel Smith, "Economic Costs and Benefits of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation to the Maldives Tourism Industry," *Increasing Climate Change Resilience of Maldives through Adaptation in the Tourism Sector*, 2015, accessed March 6, 2018. <https://www.tourism.gov.mv/downloads/publications/Economic.pdf>, 2-3.

⁸⁹ *The Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism*, March 2017, accessed March 10, 2018, <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2017/maldives2017.pdf>, 4.

⁹⁰ *First National Communication of The Republic of Maldives to The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 2001, 30.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

highest GDP “per-capita” in all of South Asia.⁹² Thus the tourism industry is highly dependent upon the “the natural environment” and, extreme weather events can seriously impede tourism activities; such as, “the 2004 tsunami,” which resulted in a “33 % decline” in the “total number of visitors” in 2005, and an approximate damage of, “US\$100 million” to the tourism industry.⁹³ Thus, climate change poses a serious threat to the economy of the Maldives, which will resultantly hinder security within the country. Tourism in the Maldives will be impacted by “rising temperatures,” “coral bleaching” and, other unfavorable effects of climate change – in essence, climate change “is expected to reduce tourism revenues by 27 % to 33 %” by the “end of the century.”⁹⁴ The coral reefs of the Maldives are highly prone to “acidification,” and will reduce future “tourism expenditures,” “fishery catches” and “important marine ecosystems and biodiversity –” directly and indirectly affecting the main economic industry of the nation.⁹⁵ Climate change will also affect the “housing and critical infrastructure,” “industries,” the “5 airports” and the “128 harbors” near the coastlines, as well as, cause sea levels to rise, threatening the already limited “freshwater resources” in the country.⁹⁶

The economic threats due to climate change are expected to obstruct the capacity of the nation, leading to disputes over the remaining resources, widespread poverty and a lack of financial security. The increased levels of economic decline within the nation will cause a significant “rural decline,” and create a need for increased “migration to urban areas –” in turn, precipitating a strain on local resources and “urban services,” such as, “education, health

⁹² Heather Hosterman and Joel Smith, *Increasing Climate Change Resilience of Maldives through Adaptation in the Tourism Sector*, 2015, 2-2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-2.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-4.

⁹⁶ "Sea-Level Rise in the Republic of Maldives," Union of Unconcerned Scientists, 2011, , accessed April 1, 2017, <http://www.climatehotmap.org/global-warming-locations/republic-of-maldives.html>.

care, law and order.”⁹⁷The Government will face a large economic burden to provide the basic necessities – thus, reducing citizen freedom, as well as, creating an “increase” in “absolute, relative and transient poverty.”⁹⁸ A lack of employment in the economy will reduce the income per head of individuals, in turn, reducing the aggregate demand for goods and services, taxes and spending and ensue a stunted economic growth or a declining economy. According to many economists, future conflicts are more apparent within countries that are “lacking education,” but more importantly, in countries “where incomes are low.”⁹⁹ A year after the 2004 tsunami hit the nation, in 2005, the Maldivian economy substantially suffered and, the capital city of the Maldives, was sparked with civil unrest on August 12th 2005.¹⁰⁰ An indirect consequence of the “100’000 people affected,” the “12000 displaced,” “8500 in temporary shelters,” a “25 %” GDP “account deficit,” severe damage to “fisheries,” “agricultural land,” and “businesses,” which required urgent funding from external development partners to recuperate from.¹⁰¹ When a Government does not collect enough tax revenue, it “reduces the capacity of the government to spend on “defense,” giving rise to “rebels” who seek employment – thus poverty perpetuates conflict, disrupts the peace and security of a nation by making citizens “desperate or angry” for their economic situations.¹⁰² This perpetuates further failures in governance and impedes fiscal growth within the economy.

The Maldives experienced a “30-year dictatorship,” which ended via a democratic vote

⁹⁷ Jon Barnett and W. Neil Adger, "Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict," *Political Geography*, 2007, accessed March 1, 2017, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2007.03.003, 642.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 645.

⁹⁹ Paul Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict," June 15, 2000, accessed March 7, 2018, <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/182/33884.html>.

¹⁰⁰ "Tsunami Impact Summary: Maldives," ReliefWeb, February 15, 2005, , accessed January 25, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/maldives/tsunami-impact-summary-maldives>.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Paul Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict," June 15, 2000.

in 2008, where by, President Mohamed Nasheed was elected to power.¹⁰³ In power, Nasheed – admired by the people, brought the Maldives climate issue into the eyes of the world. Political turmoil is often considered adverse for international diplomacy goals, since it hampers a country’s international reputation. Notwithstanding, the Maldivian government appears to have invariably held commonly laid environmental goals that it has pushed forth, nationally and internationally – against all political odds. After the “political reform” of 2004, there have been continuous improvements in the “human rights” front, as the Maldives “ratified six major international human rights conventions,” “five protocols” and “adopted the new constitution” in accordance with “international standards.”¹⁰⁴ The political effects of climate change have the capacity to hinder the peace and security of the nation. As climate change worsens in the Maldives, areas will reduce landmass due to their “submergence” in water, leading to widespread “disputes,” “conflicts” and “civil unrest” over territory and the loss of homes, which will trigger increased local and international “migration,” and bring with it, a cycle of “political instability” in the country.¹⁰⁵ Unplanned, climate induced migration would also lead to a significant political, economic and social strain on the resources of any host nation. Furthermore, the country would lose skilled workers, leaving behind only unskilled workers, causing a disparity in labor resources or a “brain drain” in the nation.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, climate

¹⁰³ Mohamed Nasheed, "In the Maldives, Our Democracy Is Being Suffocated. We Need Help," September 18, 2012, accessed February 18, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/18/maldives-our-democracy-suffocated-help>.

¹⁰⁴ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Evaluation of the European Commission's Co-operation with Maldives*, November 2010, , accessed March 20, 2018, <https://www.oecd.org/countries/maldives/47234192.pdf>, 3.

¹⁰⁵ European Commission, *Climate Change and International Security*, 2008, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Maria Waldinger, "The Effects of Climate Change on Internal and International Migration: Implications for Developing Countries," May 2015, , accessed March 20, 2018, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Working-Paper-192-Waldinger.pdf>, 18.

induced migration will create a variety of concerns for “the receiving jurisdictions,” who then, would have to alter their “public policy,” and local laws in order to accommodate many new migrants.¹⁰⁷

In addition, the political implications of climate change would provoke the nation to become a breeding ground for political turmoil, whereby, rebel groups would attempt to topple powerful leaders, causing further instability and chaos within the small island nation. The connection between “the environment and armed conflict” is well known and has been “accepted by the Security Council.”¹⁰⁸ Climate change in the Maldives will put significant “pressure on international governance,” especially, if the “international community fails” to assist the island nation against climate change.¹⁰⁹ This will instigate “political tension nationally and internationally,” spawning a significant divide between the “North and South” regions of the world.¹¹⁰ Political turbulence as the aftermath of climate change in the Maldives will significantly reduce the “implementation capacity of the country,” where by, domestic “protection programs” will dawdle.¹¹¹ Concomitantly, this will lead to regional divides within the country and generate high levels of income disparity between inhabitants. As a result, this will propagate a lack of “inclusiveness” and “limited,” and “unequal access to opportunities” within the country, such as, an “underdeveloped maritime transport network,” “small

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations, United Nations Member States, Pacific Small Island Developing States, 2009, , accessed April 10, 2018, <https://docplayer.net/20772799-Pacific-small-island-developing-states.html>, 12.

¹⁰⁹ European Commission, *Climate Change and International Security*, 2008, 8.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Philippines, Asian Development Bank, *Maldives Overcoming the Challenges of a Small Island State Country Diagnostic Study*, 2015, , accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/172704/maldives-overcoming-challenges-small-island-state.pdf>, 77.

enterprises” and an “unequal access to financial services.”¹¹²

The Muslim majority nation of the Maldives has a population of “443,203.”¹¹³ It is a country that is made up of a mix of early migrants from “Sri Lanka,” and “Southern India,” with “70,000 foreign workers,” and “33,000 illegal immigrants,” who are primarily from “Nepal,” “Bangladesh,” and “Sri Lanka.”¹¹⁴ Poverty in the state is predominantly “determined by geography,” and an “imbalance of access to services.”¹¹⁵ Besides, there is widespread “income disparity” between the “poorest and richest quintiles of the population.”¹¹⁶ Contrarily, there has been an increase in “life expectancy” within the nation due to the reduced “disparity” between genders.¹¹⁷ Health care in the nation is designated for by the Government, who finances the “health system –” and in fact, the levels of government spending have accounted for “8% of the GDP in 2007 –” this level is much greater than the spending of “other countries in the region;” indicating a reliance of the populace on the executive safety net.¹¹⁸ Hence, the social effects of climate change within the territory will engender “poor health conditions,” “unemployment,” and “social exclusion” within the public.¹¹⁹

Climate induced migration will spark ethnic tensions between religious and ethnic minorities, most common in places “where the state is weak –” thereby, insinuating

¹¹² Ibid., 80

¹¹³ Maldives Population 2019, accessed March 10, 2018, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/maldives-population/>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ India, World Health Organization, *Social Disparities in Health in the Maldives: An Assessment and Implications*, 2010, accessed March 15, 2018,

http://www.searo.who.int/maldives/documents/Maldives_Social_Disparities_in_Health.pdf, 4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁹ European Commission, *Climate Change and International Security*, 2008, 7.

“widespread human insecurity and conflict.”¹²⁰ Moreover, the severity of weather due to climate change will interrupt “education systems,” “promote civil conflict,” give rise to “ill health,” “the risk of child labor,” and “child trafficking.”¹²¹ As a result, this will interfere with “livelihoods” and cause “long term consequences,” such as, but not limited to, a reduced “ability of families to send their children to school,” “increased levels of malnutrition” and declining “gender equity.”¹²² Children, the future of any nation will be most affected by the spread of infectious “diseases,” “school dropouts,” “insecurity,” “trauma,” and a lack of proper “sanitation and drinking water.”¹²³ The “social vulnerability” of a country is known as “a condition resulting from social factors” which “increases the susceptibility of a community” toward the “impact of a hazard” which the Maldives ranks high on.¹²⁴

The Maldives is considered one of the socially weakest nations in the world, in terms of its ability to cope with environmental challenges. This is due to the “small size of population,” and its “dispersion across small islands,” which in turn, will cause “vulnerability to life,” a “lack of coping capacity,” as well as, “the vulnerability” toward “injury, food insecurity and a lack of livelihood resilience.”¹²⁵ The SID Nations are especially vulnerable to “poor sanitation,” with the surge in “water-borne, vector-borne and airborne disease;” due to rising temperatures, “water scarcity,” and “extreme storms.”¹²⁶ In turn, this will intumescence the “mosquito distribution,” and trigger “skin infections,” “gastroenteritis and fish poisoning.”¹²⁷

¹²⁰ Jon Barnett and W. Neil Adger, "Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict," 2007, 646.

¹²¹ P.K Das, "Climate Change and Education," 2010, 17.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., 21.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁶ Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations, Pacific Small Island Developing States, 2009, 8.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

For many islanders, the loss of land is not exclusively the loss of a resource, but rather, the loss of a way of life – as land, is often considered to be sacred for “their traditional or social practices,” and a loss of it represents, the loss of “the social fabric” of their society.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Ibid., 12.

Section 7: Foreign Aid Dependency

Since the birth of the nation in 1968, the Maldives has depended upon foreign aid for sustenance. In “1992,” the country received “\$11.6 million” from the “World Bank,” “Asian Development Bank” and “Japan.”¹²⁹ Following the tsunami of 2004, the “U.S provided \$8.65 million,” Libya provided “almost \$2 million,” and in January 2005, UNICEF provided “educational supplies,” worth “\$1 million” to the nation.”¹³⁰ Moreover, the European Union has contributed a sum of “€4 million,” in both “2007” and “2013,” and, Australia contributed a sum of “\$1.3 million” from “2012 to 2018,” to promote the economical, social and political welfare of the small island nation.¹³¹ In the last few years, foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country has been on an even greater “upward trajectory,” whereby, “FDI flows” have grown from, “USD 457 million in 2016,” to “USD 517 million in 2017,” and the nation has been acclaimed, as the “third recipient” of “FDI in 2017,” from all the “Small Island Developing States”¹³²

Earning foreign assets has always been a national priority for the country. The nation has made clear the need to “create clear pathways” to be able to “attract foreign investments,” and has made it simple for “foreign investors” to be able to gain “financial benefits,” by setting up and engaging in businesses within the country.¹³³ The Maldives has also made it a priority to incentivize investors by maintaining the “lowest” rates of “income tax” in the region with “little or no border tariffs” on imports, and the “commissioning” of many infrastructure projects” that

¹²⁹ Mahua Mitra, "The Success of Humanitarian Aid to the Maldives," The Borgen Project, February 14, 2018, accessed January 20, 2019, <https://borgenproject.org/humanitarian-aid-to-the-maldives/>.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² "Maldives: Foreign Investment," Santander Group, September 2018, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://en.portal.santandertrade.com/establish-overseas/maldives/investing-3>.

¹³³ John Grimley, "What Opportunities Exist for Foreign Investors in the Maldives?" ASIA LAW PORTAL, October 10, 2017, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://asialawportal.com/2017/10/10/what-opportunities-exist-for-foreign-investors-in-the-maldives/>.

have allowed “major foreign construction companies” to partake in activities in the “domestic construction sector” of the country.¹³⁴ At the “COP24-KATOWICE” climate talks held in Poland, in December 2018, The Government of Maldives garnered world attention by stating that “climate change” has now become a stifling “national security issue” for them, and that they are “not prepared to die.”¹³⁵ According to the Maldivian “economic minister” the nation is openly seeking “more foreign investments.”¹³⁶ By the same token, “Maldives sends a message to the world: It’s open for business.”¹³⁷ As a prominent holiday destination, investors in the nation often look to commence “hotel” businesses to derive soaring profits.¹³⁸ The Government of the Maldives is openly receptive to the idea of “foreign ownership” of their land, where by, foreign private investors are able to acquire the Maldivian islands ranging from, “\$7 million” to “\$12 million,” and then, inject revenue in the form of “taxes” to benefit the local economy.¹³⁹

As of 2017, the Presidency of Yameen communicated a need to “focus” on “mass tourism” in the country.”¹⁴⁰ Yameen spoke highly on the importance of “mass tourism” and “mega developments,” in terms of climate adaptation strategies for the nation.¹⁴¹ The Maldives intends to increase tourism from “1.3 million people,” to over “7 million people” in “10 years,” and, even though mass tourism will “increase carbon emissions,” it rejoins that since it “only

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Nina Chestney, Maldives Tells U.N. Climate Talks: 'We Are Not Prepared to Die', December 13, 2018, accessed February 10, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-agreement-maldives-idUSKBN1OC1QG>.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Jumana Al Tamimi, "Maldives Promises High Returns to Foreign Investors," Gulf News, December 18, 2017, accessed March 20, 2018, <https://gulfnews.com/business/tourism/maldives-promises-high-returns-to-foreign-investors-1.2143346>.

¹³⁸ Nyshka Chandran, "This Country Is Red Hot for Real-estate Investors," CNBC, December 17, 2014, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/12/17/this-country-is-red-hot-for-real-estate-investors.html>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ John Vidal, "Maldives Switches From Climate Threat to Mass Tourism," March 5, 2017, accessed February 30, 2018, <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/maldives-climate-threat-to-mass-tourism-21217>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

produces 0.003 % of global emissions,” it has every “right to develop” itself as a nation.¹⁴² The Maldives, however, proposes that it is confident that with additional “international help” they will “reduce” their “emissions” by “30 % by 2030.”¹⁴³ On December 7th 2017, China signed a “Free Trade Agreement” with the country.¹⁴⁴ The agreement aims to “strengthen” economic ties between the two countries through “bilateral trade” and a “mutually beneficial” economic relationship.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, on February 18th 2018, the Maldivian Presidency announced that the “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates,” have “pledged” a sum of “\$160 million” to support the island nation to establish “development projects” in the country.¹⁴⁶ Alternatively, since “the end of President Yameen’s tenure,” the Maldives has owed a heavy “debt to China,” most of which have been “guarantees on Chinese loans” to “companies,” in the amount of “\$935 million” on top of the “\$600 million” that the nation already owed China.¹⁴⁷ Thus, climate leadership and “diplomatic tasks” are imperative for the new Government “under Solih,” who will, in essence, be responsible for seeking “more favorable terms on existing loans” for the nation.¹⁴⁸ The Maldives depends upon climate leadership via foreign relations, political mediation and assistance, in order to attain soft power within the international community. In

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ "China and Maldives Sign the Free Trade Agreement," China FTA Network, December 9, 2017, accessed January 10, 2019, http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/enarticle/chinamedfen/chinamedfennews/201712/36458_1.html.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Zeenat Saber, "What's behind Saudi-UAE Aid to Maldives?" Al Jazeera, March 1, 2018, accessed January 10, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/saudi-uae-aid-maldives-180228130657644.html?xif=http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/enarticle/chinamedfen/chinamedfennews/201712/36458_1.html.

¹⁴⁷ Ankit Panda, "Just How Much Does the Maldives Owe China?" The Diplomat, February 12, 2019, accessed February 15, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/just-how-much-does-the-maldives-owe-china/>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

essence, the humanitarian assistance and aid allows the nation to further their climate related agenda and to build developmental assistance. This illustrates that climate-change leadership is, in essence, crucial to strengthen the nation's economic prospects and reduce the impacts of climate change that would otherwise destabilize the nation and threaten their national security.

Section 8: Importance of Tackling Environmental Challenges

Climate change threatens our planet by modifying the monetary, civic and communal potential of a nation. It diminishes personal “access to natural resources” that are vital to “sustain livelihoods,” and undermines the “capacity of states to provide opportunities and services” for civilians that substantially, “help to cultivate and build peace” in society.¹⁴⁹ Cardinaly, climate change poses a number of long term and short term, “direct and indirect threats,” to “human security,” that would feasibly, also increase the “risk of violent conflicts” in the near future.¹⁵⁰

I assert that the Maldives is active in asserting global climate leadership to protect itself from the pervasive security threats of climate change and, to draw humanitarian assistance from the international community in order to expand its economy. It assumes leadership to lower carbon emissions and to seek humanitarian assistance in coping with climate related security threats, as well as, to earn investments to supplement its economy. The Maldives, a nation state, whose economy thrives on tourism, will be severely impacted by climate change. Consequently, this would deteriorate the nation’s economic, political and social capital and weaken the state. It will emanate into a failed society and government, which would then, transcend into international borders. Climate induced threats upon the security of Maldives, are not only limited to the nation, but will also, directly and indirectly affect countries that for instance, the nation trades with, from the threat of political turmoil permeating within external borders and, the social burdens of external nations hosting future climate migrants. Therefore, it becomes the obligation of the nation to safeguard the national sovereignty of their country via soft power.

¹⁴⁹ Jon Barnett and W. Neil Adger, "Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict," 2007, 651.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

8.1 Climate Leadership and International Assistance

The Maldives “hosts” different events and “seminars/workshops/interactive dialogues” in order to advance the nation’s “advocacy” goals on climate change and bolster the “institutional, national coordination mechanism” within the country.¹⁵¹ The Maldives has “held the chairmanship” of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) for four consecutive years – ” and recently, for “the first time in its 51 years of UN Membership,” the nation is pushing to gain a “two-year non permanent seat” in “the most powerful body at the United Nations: the 15-member Security Council.”¹⁵² A prior chief of the “UN Treaty Section” declared that the Maldives is a nation that is “well placed, and, in a position to become a “trendsetter” for other SID nations, and that, once elected, would gain “sympathy of the vast majority” of members in the UN.¹⁵³

The Maldives is often outspoken about expecting funds from international NGOs such as, “from the multi-billion dollar Green Climate Fund (GCF),” as well as, inspiring other nations, such as, Sri Lanka, who remarked that “seeing our loyal friend and neighbor seeking a non permanent Security Council seat, should also encourage Sri Lanka to do the same in the not-too-distant future.” The connection between the nation’s “vulnerability” and “assigning political priority” is a “common legacy” in all-previous Maldivian leaderships.¹⁵⁴

In “1989,” President Gayoom “reinforced this narrative” at the “Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise in Malé” stating that:

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵² Thalif Deen, "Sinking Island Seeks Seat in Security Council," ReliefWeb, July 27, 2017, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/maldives/sinking-island-seeks-seat-security-council>.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Stefano Malatesta and Marcella Schmidt Di Friedberg, "Environmental Policy and Climate Change Vulnerability in the Maldives: From the ‘lexicon of Risk’ to Social Response to Change," *Island Studies Journal* 12, no. 1 (2017), 2017, accessed February 7, 2018, doi:10.24043/isj.5, 61.

*“There must be a way out. Neither the Maldives nor any small island nation wants to drown. That’s for sure. Neither do we want our lands eroded nor our economies destroyed. Nor do we want to become environmental refugees either. We want to stand up and fight.”*¹⁵⁵

This “narrative has shaped the country’s image” in the world as a nation that endeavors to become a “strongly committed actor in the international scenario,” determined to decipher a “global solution” in order, “to achieve a low-emission development future” to tackle climate change.¹⁵⁶ In terms of leading a “carbon neutral plan,” the nation has turned out to be “an exemplary country and forerunner, in the advocacy for climate change action in the world.”¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the nation’s actual “vulnerability paradigm,” attempts to “reinforce the nation-ness of communities” existing within the small island nation.¹⁵⁸

The chair of a SID state customarily conveys the agenda for other nations to emulate. Thus, the Maldives, greatly threatened by climate change, is well equipped to carry out the mission and message of climate change to the rest of the domain. As chair of the (SIDS), the Maldives stipulates that it would like the international body to “recognize” that their “needs and concerns” concerning climate change, must be “addressed” swiftly.¹⁵⁹ Prioritizing climate change will sanction support to the nation through the “Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund,” a means to “multilateral and bilateral sources –” thus, authorizing the state to “undertake a number of activities” for “early action” regarding climate change, and to “develop

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 62.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 62.

¹⁵⁹ Germany, UNFCCC, *Climate Change Small Island Developing States*, 2005, accessed March 18, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>, 25.

national climate change action plans,” “mitigation strategies” and “initiate education, training and public awareness campaigns, designed to engage the general public on the problem.”¹⁶⁰

Resources from the international sphere induce cooperation, and aid their “capacity” to conduct “vulnerability and adaptation assessments,” as well as, “develop renewable energy sources.”¹⁶¹ Climate leadership permits the nation to equip itself in its preparedness against the costs of climate change. Climate focused conferences yield resources, for instance, the Special Climate Change Fund, set under the Kyoto Protocol – provided a sum of “USD 34.7 million,” to “assist SIDS meet the costs of adaptation.”¹⁶² International cooperation against climate change pushes forth the national agenda of “Sustainable Development,” and is recognized as, the most “complex development challenge,” that the small island nation faces.¹⁶³

The Maldives believes that there must be a “binding agreement” to “reduce global carbon emissions,” and, it must be immediately enacted upon as “the world cannot afford to wait,” and a lack of “global accord” is still not permissible to do unequivocally “nothing” to oppose this predicament.¹⁶⁴ This accentuates the Maldives allegiance and tenacity to urge world leaders to act swiftly upon the matter. In order to earn commiseration and consolation, the nation often reiterates its image of victimhood, positing that it contributes the least carbon emissions – yet, is one of “the most vulnerable” nations to the threats of climate change.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Dr. Mohamed Waheed, "Statement by His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Waheed, President of the Republic of Maldives" (New York), September 27, 2012, accessed February 20, 2018, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/67/MV_en.pdf, 2.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 3.

Section 9: Climate Leadership and Capacity Building

Climate leadership elevates perception, accumulates exposure and endowments to further “strengthen the knowledge and leadership,” in addressing climate change within international and local domains.¹⁶⁶ It authorizes adaptive capacity, promotes “energy efficiency,” builds renewable energy and improves policy and institutional capacities in the public and private sectors to bolster “adaptation and mitigation,” overall, counteracting the future threats of climate change upon the security of the nation and expanding their economy through assistance.¹⁶⁷ The nation reckons the fundamentals of involvement from “all sectors of development, the people, government and non-governmental organizations” in the fight against climate change.¹⁶⁸

In his address to the United Nations, the President of Maldives, stated that they “engage in international cooperation” to “help, not hinder” their “march towards a better, more democratic society,” as they perpetually “look for new ideas,” and are in fact, “receptive to good ideas” from everywhere.¹⁶⁹ Their climate leadership aims to “build” “institutions” and “gain public confidence” in governance.¹⁷⁰ Climate leadership permits increased participation from regional, as well as, international actors to advance their environmental policy goals of: i) “sustainable financing in climate change adaptation opportunities,” ii) “a low emission development future” iii) building “climate resilient infrastructure and communities,” iv) “inculcating national, regional and international climate change advocacy role in leading the international negotiations and awareness in cross sectional areas” and, v) fostering “sustainable development whilst

¹⁶⁶ Republic of Maldives, *Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework*, Draft 3, n.d, 3.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁶⁹ Dr. Mohamed Waheed, "Statement by His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Waheed, President of the Republic of Maldives" (New York), 2012, 3.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

ensuring security, economic sustainability and sovereignty from the negative consequences of the changing climate.”¹⁷¹

The nation maintains that these sustainability goals must be “prioritized” by the international sphere, to achieve “safety and resilience.”¹⁷² The Government aims to “position itself to obtain maximum benefits from relevant international and regional instruments,” for increased “support for public, private, NGOs and communities,” in being able to “protect critical infrastructure” and to be able to evaluate “poverty, health and food security” in the nation.¹⁷³ As a result, the nation has gained political leverage within the international community. The Government aims to extend education and empowerment to the public, so that “local governments” are able to include “adaptation” within their agendas, and so that other nations can follow suit in the footsteps of the Maldives to minimize the effects of climate change upon local and international security.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Republic of Maldives, *Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework*, Draft 3, n.d, 12.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

9.1 Future Improvements

The Maldives is a “key international actor advocating” for “climate change,” still, the “existing institutional setup is not adequate” for the country.¹⁷⁵ Various international projects on climate change are “carried out in a fragmented manner,” with multitudinous “different government institutions” owning “different intent” and, resulting in “conflicting mandates,” as well as, “disappointed and uncoordinated climate related pursuits.”¹⁷⁶ An increased consideration is required to counter threats to “achieve ambitious targets of low emissions development,” to pursue climate “activities in harmony,” and to grasp key lessons from past “conventions.”¹⁷⁷ Consequently, promoting sustainable development at “a desirable rate,” to achieve the nation’s “2020 mitigation target.”¹⁷⁸

To reduce the impacts of climate change, it is imperative for the Maldives to brace “institutional capacities” for “successful implementation” of “adaptation strategies.”¹⁷⁹ This stipulates fortifying the “legal, institutional and administrative arrangements of the agencies,” as well as, involving “various government and private agencies” to “strengthen the coordination and cooperation between the departments.”¹⁸⁰ A modus operandi to supplement the institutional “research capacity” in the nation is for instance, “developing long-term partnerships” with “overseas universities –” which would, subsequently “provide the opportunity for specialized short courses by visiting professors,” and permit “Maldivian research students,” to partake in

¹⁷⁵ Republic of Maldives, *Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework*, Draft 3, n.d, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ *First National Communication of The Republic of Maldives to The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 2001, 90.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

“fieldwork” at “home,” to engender an increase in awareness and education in the youth.¹⁸¹ In the altercation against climate change, it is imperative to maintain “coordination and cooperation programs, at international and regional levels –” hence, establishing “institutional capacity” in the country.¹⁸² As a nation thriving on tourism, Maldives can invest in “green tourism” to “reduce costs” and “enhance the value of ecosystems,” as well as, its “cultural heritage.”¹⁸³

For small island nations, “social capital” is a vital asset, and therefore, to avert the loss of remittances from “high levels of migration,” the nation can “build productive resources on the ground” via “financial and bilateral immigration policies,” which “encourage remittances and circular migration.”¹⁸⁴ Through international endeavors, the island nation can yield variegated steps to increase national capacity and enhance, “resettlement efforts,” “public outreach efforts,” “the possibility of creating a coral reef research center” and, the development of “reclaimed land, at least one meter above sea level.”¹⁸⁵ Inevitably, the future of climate leadership in the next century will be critical in safeguarding the nation, promoting fiscal augmentation and coercing international establishments and actors to concomitantly work towards a greener world.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 91.

¹⁸³ Jeffrey Haskins, CTA Policy Brief. *Building Resilience in Small Island Economies: From Vulnerabilities to Opportunities*, 8, November 2012, , accessed March 17, 2018, 3-4.
[http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpadocs/Building Resilience in Small Island Economies.pdf](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpadocs/Building%20Resilience%20in%20Small%20Island%20Economies.pdf).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁵ James G. Titus, "Policy Implications of Sea Level Rise: The Case of the Maldives." *Adapting to Global Warming*, November 1989, accessed February 20, 2018,
http://papers.risingsea.net/Maldives/Small_Island_States_3.html.

Section 10: Conclusion

In conclusion, vulnerable small island nations that lack significant hard power will often resort to soft power to achieve their purpose in world politics. As chair of the Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) for four consecutive years, the Maldives has become ‘a symbol’ of green politics in the world and inspires other nations to follow suit in their endeavor against climate change. The nation accepts that it exclusively cannot fight against the climate change conundrum as it is a global, complex and multifaceted challenge; and thus, requires the assistance from external resources, partnerships, funding and finances, including prioritization, to cut emissions, and to promote greater economic welfare within the small island nation. The Republic of Maldives adheres to the belief that the world must act swiftly and collaboratively in the fight against climate change. Thereupon, green leadership is a tool that the country utilizes in order to address these concerns within the international community. The prioritization of climate leadership provides the nation with the prospect of obtaining soft power and as a result, the nation earns foreign aid, investments and assistance from the international community to further their national economic priorities. By the same token, the Maldivian climate leadership attempts to address issues of immediate concern such as preserving “infrastructure,” “tourism,” “human health,” “water resources,” and “food security,” as the most pertinent areas of concern.”¹⁸⁶ As a nation heavily reliant upon tourism, climate leadership not only offers foreign aid and investments, but also, strives to preserve the nation’s key natural resources in a way to maintain and promote tourism revenues. Climate leadership is a stratagem employed by the small island nation in order to gain soft power to combat the challenges induced by climate change and to safeguard their national sovereignty. Climate leadership directs foreign assistance

¹⁸⁶ Republic of Maldives, *Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework*, Draft 3, n.d, 5.

to the Maldives so that they can improve their outreach, as well as expand and diversify their economy. Climate leadership for the Maldives provides the nation with international assistance and allows it to be better prepared to deal with the impending threats. Thus, climate leadership grants the nation soft power to structure their narrative and manufacture demands in the international community via political networks, agenda framing, and state-crafted bargaining.

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