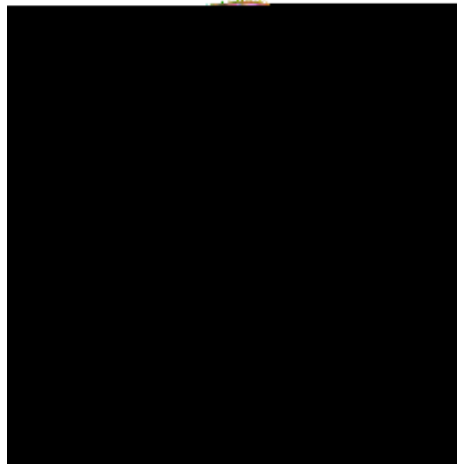


# REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES



Report on Climate Change  
and its Possible Security Implications  
(General Assembly resolution 63/281)

Submitted to the  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Division for Sustainable Development  
United Nations  
New York

10 August 2009



threatened ecosystems and to avoid a large increase in the risks associated with extreme weather events.”<sup>5</sup>

Observational evidence also confirms that human societies and the ecosystems on which they depend “are highly vulnerable to even modest levels of climate change, with poor nations and communities, ecosystem services and biodiversity particularly at risk.”<sup>6</sup> The growing intensity of tropical cyclones, droughts, extreme heat waves and floods projected in many regions will have profound impacts on human settlements through increased water stress, more frequent wildfires, heightened risks of flooding and catastrophic storm surges, threats to agriculture, and adverse health effects.<sup>7</sup>

***Climate Change will increase water scarcity***

With respect to freshwater, for example, IPCC Technical Paper VI (2008) concludes that “[o]bservational records and climate projections provide abundant evidence that freshwater resources are vulnerable and have the potential to be strongly impacted by climate change, with wide-ranging consequences for human societies and ecosystems.”<sup>8</sup>

***Heightened storm surges will expose millions to catastrophic flooding***

In addition to its direct impact on coastal lands and water supplies, sea level rise will dramatically increase exposure to storm surges among coastal populations. In 2008, the World Bank's Development Research Group assessed the likely impact of sea level rise on storm surge vulnerability in 84 coastal developing States across five regions.<sup>11</sup> They found that storm surge exposure due to global warming would result in "large, globally pervasive potential impacts."<sup>12</sup> A 10% increase in storm surge intensity would subject more than 25% of the territory assessed, and 52 million additional people, to the risk of inundation. The additional 125,000 km<sup>2</sup> at risk of flooding includes more than 29,000 km<sup>2</sup> of agricultural land and nearly 15,000 km<sup>2</sup> in urban areas,<sup>13</sup> with a striking concentration of impacts on "highly vulnerable large cities at the low end of the international income distribution."<sup>14</sup>

Notably, the conclusions of the World Bank report are exclusive of impacts on the small island developing States most profoundly threatened by sea level rise.<sup>15</sup> For SIDS in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, sea level rise, catastrophic flooding and storm surges present a serious threat to their very existence. Outlying islands in some nations are already being evacuated; according to IPCC projections, many of these island nations are likely to disappear by the end of 21st century.

***Climate change will lead to greater food insecurity and potential supply shocks***

Through these and other mechanisms, climate change poses profound risks to food security in many regions. Projected population and economic growth will double food demand by 2050, increasing the threat of food insecurity, even in the absence of climate change, with many developing countries experiencing serious poverty and food insecurity due to localized high population growth rates, poor socio-economic capacity and continued natural resource degradation.<sup>16</sup> As the FAO reported to the High Level Conference (HLC) on World Food Security in June 2008:

Climate change will superimpose itself on these existing trends, significantly increasing production risk and rural vulnerability, particularly in regions that already suffer from chronic soil and water resource

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<sup>11</sup> Dasgupta, S., Laplante, B., Murray, S., Wheeler, D., 2008: Sea Level Rise and Storm Surges: A Comparative Analysis of Impacts in Developing Countries. Policy Research Working Paper 4901, World Bank, Washington, DC, 43 pp.

<sup>12</sup> Id. at 33.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. at 13.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. at 34.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. at 6.

<sup>16</sup> FAO, 2008: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Countries, Doc. No. FAO/HLC08/Inf 2, at 1. Prepared for the High Level Conference on World Food Security (Rome, 3 – 5 June 2008) (hereinafter HLCWFS).

scarcity, high exposure to climatic extremes including droughts and flooding, poverty and hunger.<sup>17</sup>

Speaking to that conference, the Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group II observed that, while not yet the primary cause, climate change is already a factor in current food shortages, with some recent droughts possibly attributable to rising greenhouse gas concentrations. In coming years, climate change will increase drought in important food-producing regions and is likely to reduce food production potential, especially in some already food-short areas.<sup>18</sup> In so doing, climate change could amplify an already “unprecedented level of risk” of global supply shocks.<sup>19</sup>

In his statement to the HLC, President James Aix Michel communicated the gravity of this issue for Seychelles and other island nations that import the majority of their food:

Combined with the scarcity of land and the effects of climate change such as land degradation, land salinization from sea level rise and extended droughts, agriculture on small islands has also suffered serious setbacks, worsening an already heavy reliance on food imports. . . .

I would ask the Task Force to consider the special case of small island states when proposing solutio

***Climate change will displace populations on a massive scale***

There is nearly universal recognition that the impact of climate change is a significant and growing threat to human development and the environment. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that climate change will displace populations on a massive scale, particularly in low-lying coastal areas and small island developing States (SIDS).

***Climate change and its impacts undermine human rights***

Climate change also has direct implications for the protection and enjoyment of human rights. As the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme observed in 2001:

*Human rights cannot be secured in a degraded or polluted environment... Environmental conditions clearly help to determine the extent to which people enjoy their basic rights to life, health, adequate food and housing, and traditional livelihood and culture. It is time to recognize that those who pollute or destroy the natural environment are not just committing a crime against nature, but are violating human rights as well.*

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The right to water is also at risk. In Asia alone, the loss of glaciers and reductions in



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The European Union has recognized climate change as a threat to its own security interests. Upon request, the High Representative

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increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons “seriously endanger the stability and peaceful development of the region.”<sup>47</sup>

As previously noted, Council held its first debate on climate change and security in 2007.

These situations pose a significant threat to the inalienable right to survival and existence of the people of the Seychelles. In light of its national circumstances, Seychelles agrees with the statement of H.E. Menon of Singapore at the conclusion of the 2007 debate that “it seems obvious to all but the willfully blind that climate change must, if not now, eventually have some impact on international peace and security.”<sup>51</sup>

This impact brings the matter of climate change within the competence and cognizance of the Security Council, and creates in the Council a responsibility to take responsive measures to mitigate these security risks and safeguard international peace and stability.

### **Conclusion**

The Republic of Seychelles acknowledges the key role of the UNFCCC on issues pertaining to climate change. However, the Republic of Seychelles also recognizes the urgent need for engagement by all of the UN organs and specifically the Security Council. For the reasons discussed above, climate change and its security implications fall within the scope of the Security Council’s mandate and thus require further discussion and immediate action by the Council.

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<sup>51</sup> S.C. P.V. 5663 (Resumption 1), U.N. Doc. S/RV/5663 (Resumption 1) (Apr. 17, 2007).