TODAY'S SESSION

Today's session begins at 0930 hrs. Two papers on sea level rise will be presented in the morning.

They will be focused on "Evidence of climate and temperature change" by Dr. Richard Warrick, and "Measuring Sea Level Changes" by Dr. David Pugh.

The afternoon session begins at 1500 hrs. The focus is on Vulnerability of Small States to sea level rise. The two papers to be presented are:

"Sea Defence, Adjustment and Disaster preparedness: Requirements for Holistic and International Strategies" by Dr. James Lewis, and "A Pacific Perspective" by Prof. Roger McLean.

The evening session begins at 1645 and would continue until 1800 hrs. The discussions are on Effects of Sea Level Rise on Ecosystems. The two papers to be presented are "Possible Effects of Sea Level Rise on Mangrove Ecosystems" by Dr. Joanna Ellison, and "Possible Effects of Sea Level Rise on Corals and Reef Growth" by Dr. Barbara Brown.

ARRIVALS

By late last night, 25 delegates from fifteen participating countries, ten observer states, ten organisations as well as all the resource persons except Dr. John C. Pernetta had arrived. Among the delegates are the Ministers Lt. Col. Apolosi Biuvakaloloma, Minister for Rural Development and Rural Housing Fiji; and Hon. Babera Kirata Obe, Minister for Home Affairs and Decentralisation of Kiribati; Hon. Dr. S. Maafu Tupoun acting Minister of Lands Survey and Natural Resources, Tonga; Hon Sir Ramesh Jeewoolall, Minister of Housing Lands and Environment, Mauritius; Hon. Jack T. Hopa, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Vanuatu; and Dr. Haaji Ismail Bin Pengiran Haji Damit, Minister of Development, Brunei.

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CONFERENCE LOGO

"The logo literally shows the rising waves swallowing up the earth. But, the fact that it is still visible gives hope of saving the earth from sinking," says Sappe, the designer of the logo for the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise.

Mr. Mohamed Shafeeq (26), better known as "Sappe", has been an artist since childhood. He is a B.A. Honours graduate in Architectural Studies.
WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

In order not to keep you totally away from the rest of the world during your short stay in the island resort, we have world news in brief culled from BBC World Service every 8 hours, beginning from 0800 hrs local time today. It will be placed in the pigeon holes assigned to your delegation. The pigeon holes are in the lobby outside the Conference Hall.

FOR YOU AT THE CONFERENCE VENUE

A number of service counters such as airline, banking and medical facilities as well as postal service and a communication centre, have been arranged especially for the convenience of Conference delegates and media, and are based in the Kurumba reception area lobby.

AT KURUMBA

Kurumba Island Resort - the venue of this conference - was first an uninhabited island, until tourism first began in 1972. It would be correct to state that though it started from small beginnings, Kurumba is today the pride of the Maldives, since it has been today rated as the only five-star hotel in the country. In fact, it was during the height of the tourist season in the mid-1980's that the resort was reconstructed, revamped and the facilities now available came to be thought of. The hotel has today 150 double bedrooms, and 5 spacious suites. All rooms are air conditioned, with IDD facilities.

In addition, it has two swimming pools, two lit tennis courts, a health centre with fully equipped gymnasium and facilities.

Only 15 minutes away from capital Male', the resort has a fleet of speedboats that can take you to any island, amidst the scenery that is so typical to the Maldives.

Owned by the Universal Group, the biggest tourist business enterprise in the Maldives, whose Chairman M.U. Maniku told "Highlights" that he was all happy to hold this important conference at Kurumba. Development is going on apace, he said, because if you have to develop tourism, it is equally important that the islands where the tourists choose to come over and spends days or weeks of relaxation should be equally developed so as to provide them with all the basic facilities that a five-star hotel - island hotel - provide anywhere in the world. Manager Mohamed Naseem is busy round the clock, making sure that every thing is spick and span before the conference proper gets going. But then, the motto is to serve the visitor not only during the conference but to look into every aspect from the visitor's arrival at Kurumba right up to the point he or she leaves.
TOMORROW

Tomorrow's morning session will also focus on resource papers.

The three papers to be discussed in the morning are:

1. "Salt Water Intrusion into Ground Water: An assessment of effects on small island states due to rising sea level" by Dr. Colin Woodroffe, University of Wollongong, Australia.

2. "Resource use and the environment with special reference to sea level rise and flooding."

3. "The potential impacts of climatic change and sea level rise on the South Pacific Island" by Dr. John Pernetta, University of Papua New Guinea.

The second session of the day begins at 1115 hrs. Focus is on Perspectives for the Future. Papers to be presented:

1. "Sea Level Rise - A Coral Atoll Perspective" by Mr. Hassan Ahmed Manik and Mr. Mohamed Ali of the Maldives delegation.

2. "Strategies for the future" by Dr. Alasdair Edwards of University of New Castle-upon-Tyne, U.K.

3. "Review of progress in International cooperation concerning climatic change" by Dr. Vincent Cable from the Economic Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

FOR MUSLIM DELEGATES

Please note that the resort provides a fully air-conditioned mosque located behind the reception area (shown in the plan of Kurumba Village in the Information Guide Book), and Friday prayers will be conducted at 1235 hrs.
ROUND-UP OF PARTICIPANTS

Eighteen Small States mostly lead by Senior Ministers are participating in the conference.

Australia, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, USSR, United Kingdom and the USA are participating as observers.

Also participating in the conference are a number of international and regional organisations. They are Commission of Europe Communities, the Commonwealth, Organisation of Islamic Countries, SAARC, the United Nations agencies - UNDP,UNCTAD, UNEP, UNICEF, and the World Meteorological Organisation.

All eyes will however be on the resource persons whose contributions by way of research papers and analytical presentations will form the core content of the conference proper, since most of the deliberations would be based on them and ultimately the resolutions adopted at the end of the conference would have inevitably to be based on their finding on global warming and sea level rise.

The Commonwealth will be represented by Sir Sridath Ramphal, the Secretary-General.

LIGHTER MOMENTS

Fiji's head of delegation to the conference, Lt. Col. Apolosi Buivakalolma is no small man. Gentlespoken, Fiji's Minister for Rural Development and Rural Housing told that this was his first visit to the Maldives, but he had heard of its beauty by so many travelers. Fiji, says, Lt. Col. Apolosi, is bigger than the Maldives, but it is itself facing the same crisis from sea level rise, because its biggest revenue-earner - sugar, comes from extensive sugarcane farmlands that are mainly grown on the shoreline. Fiji, like the Maldives, is constantly developing its tourist industry, because right now the country's second highest money spinner is tourism. Timber cut from extensive forests in the Fiji islands is also a major revenue earner, according to the Minister.

When we met a young lady, the first impression we had was that its just another tourist who has come with her parents to Kurumba for a well-earned "away from the winter" holiday and for relaxation. But no. This young lady is no other than Dr. Joanna Ellison from the Department of Geography of the famed Berkeley University of California. Joanna was simply relaxing and perhaps looking around just to find out what a resort island in the Maldives looks like. But she was willing to spare a few moments for some lighter moments with "Highlights". Joanna is humbly proud to call herself a native of the Kayman Islands. The dangers that the small states face from sea level rise is as potentially great for my country, because we too are a land of mangroves.

Kiribati's Minister for Home Affairs and Decentralisation, Mr. Babera Kirata Obe is also in charge of the mass media in his country - a population of just 68,000 settled in three different groups of islands, namely Gilbert, Phoenix and Line Islands.

Minister Obe looks like the average Maldivian in complexion and that explains one reason why he told "Highlights" that there is so much in common between the two countries. Kiribati's two main revenue earners are fisheries and the coconut industry. Situated just two degrees South and two degrees North of the equator, Kiribati is unique in that the international dateline divides the country into halves. Kiribati currency is the Australian Dollar.

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