LOW POWER PACIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY IN CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS[1]

Small island communities are among those most vulnerable to the security risks of climate change.[2] In the Pacific, warming trends are causing sea levels to rise, destroying coral reefs and reducing precipitation. Rising sea levels contaminate underground water tables, cause coastal erosion, destroy natural vegetation and make farmlands inoperable. Lowland island nations, such as Tuvalu[3], are among the most vulnerable and least able to adapt. Concerned about these of environmental changes, the government of Tuvalu has appealed to Australia and New Zealand to allow Tuvaluans to relocate as rising sea levels make evacuation necessary.

Pacific island diplomats are engaged in United Nations (UN) multilateral negotiations to address the risks of global climate warming. As "low-power" actors, small island delegates are intentionally confronting the powerful industrialized countries responsible for climate warming. The process of generating international agreements on any issue is difficult, and negotiations to address ecological conflicts, which mix economics, politics, the environment and scientific uncertainty, are considered the most complicated and difficult to resolve (Susskind 1994).

This paper analyzes how Pacific island leaders engage in multilateral diplomacy to persuade more powerful actors to address the effects of global climate warming. It identifies strategies of less powerful groups, and it recognizes dilemmas. The study begins with a brief discussion of the case issue - climate warming - recognizing its potential consequences and UN multilateral responses. Within this context, it explains how Pacific island leaders advance their own security and contribute to the resolution of complex global ecological conflicts. The analysis identifies factors that strengthen low-power disadvantaged groups in multilateral diplomacy and the benefits of their participation. A conflict resolution systems framework highlights commonalities between flexible solutions and the resolution of conflicts.

Within interdependent ecological systems, the resolution of conflict is conceived as a dynamic, long-term process of building mutually beneficial relationships. The process strengthens the weakest and most vulnerable subsystems within the system as a whole (Clements 1993). Flexibility is at the heart of conflict resolution (Druckman and Mitchell 1995), not force, coercion, sanctions or other command and control tactics. Systems theory highlights the significance of cooperation: "In order for a system to run efficiently, the subsystems must cooperate" (Richardson 1998).

Climate Warming

Climate warming refers to the profound and rapid increase in average near-surface

[1]Presented at the "Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Asia Pacific Region Conference" sponsored by the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. March 31-April 3, 2005. Brisbane, Australia.

[2] Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change: http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc

[3]See web site for Tuvalu: www.tuvaluislands.com

temperatures of the Earth. The 1990s were the warmest decade of the last millennium, and scientists expect an increase in average global temperatures of 1.4 to 5.8 degrees Centigrade by 2100. [4] Many factors force climate warming. Except for solar variation, some form of human activity is linked to each factor. Of particular concern are the destructive global effects of industrialization, which is increasing atmospheric greenhouse gases. About 75% of the anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere during the past 20 years are due to burning of fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal. The rest is predominantly due to land-use change, especially deforestation.[5]

Climate warming is a common source of vulnerability. The global security risks include drought, melting glaciers, heating of the oceans and rising sea levels. The sea level rose 10-20 cm during the 20th century, and an additional increase of 9 to 88 cm is expected by the year 2100.[6] The effects of rising sea levels include coastal soil erosion, salination of coastal fresh water supplies, mass migration from heavily populated coastlines, and the complete disappearance of some island nations. More immediate and significant impacts are related to extreme changes in the nature of tropical cyclones and storm surges.

Climate warming first surfaced as a UN security issue in 1972, during the Conference on the Human Environment. Twenty years later, the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro provided an international platform for raising media attention and political interest in developing policies to address this global ecological threat. The 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) was ratified by 186 states. This agreement begins with an acknowledgment that human activities have substantially increased greenhouse gases and establishes a shared global ecological concern and inter-relationship: "Concerned that human activities have been substantially increasing the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases, that these increases enhance the natural greenhouse effect, and that this will result on average in an additional warming of the Earth's surface and atmosphere and may adversely affect natural ecosystems and humankind" (FCCC 1992:1).

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change links actions to forestall climate warming to the long-term goal of sustainable development.[7] Principles of equity are central to the discussions. With regard to the least developed countries, the FCCC acknowledged the common but differentiated responsibilities of industrialized and developing parties and prioritized the capacities of vulnerable communities and countries. In the 1992 Convention, small island states are explicitly recognized among the most vulnerable and least able to adapt to climate warming.

Asymmetrical Negotiations

The UN provides a forum for the resolution of international threats to peace and

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[4] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change "Essential Background" at http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/2877.php

[5] Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change: http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg1/index.htm

[6] Ibid.

[7] The UN World Commission on Environment and Development defines "sustainable development" as growth which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

security.[8] The UN Charter establishes equal sovereign rights for all nation states, large and small. While formal negotiations at the UN are limited to the delegates of member states, they are strongly influenced by external actors, including the private sector, civil society organizations, foundations, and regional alliances. The multilateral dynamics of UN negotiations are considered hard to manage, and yet they are more inclusive and transparent when compared to bilateral negotiations. These inclusive features create opportunities for low power delegates to influence policy making.

In UN climate change negotiations, diplomats representing vulnerable small island populations confront diplomats from modern industrialized structures. Among the most powerful forces represented at the table are multinational gas, oil, coal and transportation industries. These private sector actors negotiate with clear objectives: to maximize profits and minimize risks. Though not directly involved in UN deliberations, they influence policies through vast financial, technical and political resources.

In contrast, UN diplomats representing island nations tend to be understaffed. If functioning in isolation, they have limited access to scientific knowledge and technical or financial resources. They are disadvantaged by the complexity of multiple meetings, issue linkages and side payments. Island leaders view the threats of climate warming in terms of adaptation, sustainable development, cultural heritage and communal lands. A Paramount Chief from the Pacific island of Vanuatu explains: "Land is the whole way of life. It is history and identity, not a commodity. Land is the mother."[9] Internationally, small island states are perceived as powerless to manage adverse industrial practices, which can have a disproportionate impact on them. President Teburoro Tito, of the Republic of Kiribati, captures the perspectives of the small islands in an interview with a *New York Times* reporter:

> "It's like little ants making a home on a leaf floating on a pond. And the elephants go to drink and roughhouse in the water. The problem isn't the ants' behavior. It's a problem of how to convince the elephants to be more gentle" (Kristof 1997).

In response to evidence of environmental degradation associated with climate warming, Pacific island diplomats are proactively working within coalitions and alliances to protect their lands and cultures for present and future generations. UN multilateral deliberations provide the forum for representatives of vulnerable low-power groups to address the most powerful "elephants" through international conferences, working groups and other venues. The extensive multilateral deliberation can be frustrating, as it is difficult to navigate through the subtle political complexities that exclude low-power actors, including the imbalance in access to knowledge, the time-consuming incremental approaches, the side payments that divide partners, and the empty rhetoric.

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[8] "Security" encompasses not only military threats but also the risks of disease, poverty, drought, loss of biodiversity, rising sea levels, ozone depletion and other ecological matters.

[9] "Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Asia Pacific Region Conference" sponsored by the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. March 31-April 3, 2005. Brisbane, Australia.

Low-Power Strategies

Pacific island diplomats enter UN multilateral negotiations from the periphery of global media attention, political influence and economic power. As representatives of low-power countries, how do these leaders contribute to multilateral diplomacy and the resolution of conflicts associated with climate warming? The following pages summarize evidence found in UN climate change documents, position papers and the testimonials of expert informants.[10] The strategies of small island leaders are discussed according to three features or conflict resolution: *prevention, transformation and management.*

Prevention

The first priority of island leaders is to prevent large-scale and irreversible damage to their societies and environments. Simply stated, *prevention* is a proactive effort to "do no harm". The ability to mobilize diverse interest groups in support of peaceful or non-violent relationships rests primarily on the capacity to generate shared meanings (Rapoport 1997). Prevention is centered in ongoing communication and trust building. The purpose of fact-finding, research, policy negotiations and commitments is to respond to changing dynamics with sustainable solutions.

To prevent the long-term risks of climate warming, Pacific island diplomats have successfully adopted three strategies. The first strategy is to raise international awareness of the common vulnerability posed by climate warming, and the specific risks to small-island and lowland coastal communities. Through UN multilateral negotiations, Pacific island nations have gained access to coalitions and alliances, and these relationships provide new opportunities to advocate internationally. The second strategy is to advance support for the precautionary principle, which states that action to forestall large-scale irreversible damage is warranted, even when the risks are not yet fully understood. The third strategy is to advocate for fair and equitable investments in sustainable development. This is a long-term priority and a major dilemma, as the pressures to address short-term social and economic interests often conflicts with the long-term commitment to protect natural resources for future generations.

Various sources of evidence suggest that Pacific island leaders have been effective in bringing the security threats of global climate warming to the forefront of international attention and UN policy making. The specific risks to small island states are clearly recognized in the 1992 FCCC agreement, which explicitly acknowledges the risks of climate warming to small islands and other vulnerable countries in three references. An example:

> "Recognizing further that low-lying and other small island countries, countries with low-lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas or areas liable to floods, drought and desertification, and developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change" (FCCC 1992:2).

Small island advocacy is symbolic, and it is essential. This meaning making creates a rationale for action. Examples are found in UN speeches, position papers, declarations and agreements. In 2000, 189 nations ratified the United Nations Millennium

[10] The source of this evidence is multi-method dissertation research (Larson 2001).

Declaration, which defines a set of goals, targets and indicators for combating hunger, poverty, disease and environmental degradation. "Goal 8: Target 14 Develop a global partnership for development" explicitly recognizes the special needs of small island developing States through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small lsland Developing States and the outcome of the Twenty-second Special Session of the General Assembly.[11]

In 2002, at the Preparatory Committee meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, His Excellency (H.E.) Ambassador Tuiloma Neroni Slade spoke on behalf of the 43 member countries of AOSIS. He stated that climate warming goes directly to the roots of sustainability. Ambassador Slade called for serious commitments on adaptation measures to minimize the vulnerabilities to small and low-lying island communities that are already in danger. He challenged industrialized nations to take urgent and meaningful action:

> "Climate change is not of our doing…we are seriously concerned about the lack of willingness among the industrialised countries to take on their rightful responsibilities. They cannot be unaware that human lives and livelihoods are already now gravely at risk" (Slade 2002).

In 2004, H.E. Ambassador Enele Sopoaga from Tuvalu proposed that climate warming should be part of the reform agenda of the Security Council. He stated that security, which tends to be associated with military threats, should be viewed in its multi-dimensional nature. He pointed to the external forces that threaten his country. "The impact of climate change has the potential to threaten the survival of our entire nation. Subsequently, we firmly believe, and I am sure I share the sentiments of many vulnerable island countries, that these environmental concerns should be part of the reform agenda of the Security Council" (Sopoaga 2004).

Transformation

Whereas prevention is primarily concerned with the symbolism of understandings, trust and commitments, the dynamics of conflict *transformation* actually realign social relations. One strategy for transforming an imbalance in power relations is to build support through networks, coalitions and alliances. Low-power groups implemented this strategy in climate change negotiations. Recognizing that they tend to be overlooked when negotiating as single states, 43 small island and low-lying coastal countries formed the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) during the Second World Climate Conference in 1990.[12]

The 43 states that joined AOSIS are located primarily in the Pacific and the Caribbean and include island nations of the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and South China Sea. The countries of AOSIS represent one fifth of the total membership of the United Nations. The inclusive format of multilateral negotiations provides extensive opportunities for AOSIS delegates to raise awareness and build support within larger coalitions that include the G77/China and the European Union. By developing one

[11] See www.un.org/documents/ga/res/55/a55r002.pdf-A/RES/55/2

[12] See AOSIS web site: www.aosis.org/

cohesive voice, AOSIS member states have increased their influence within the UN system as a whole.

A second low-power strategy is to gain leadership roles within decision-making bodies. There are numerous examples of Pacific island leadership in climate change negotiations. H.E. Ambassador Robert Van Lierop of Vanuatu, the first Chair of AOSIS, played a proactive role in the preparations for the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, where climate warming was a major topic of negotiation. He was named co-chair of Working Group II during the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Geneva in 1991. This group articulated the convention's institutional framework and established reporting and dispute resolution provisions. Pacific island delegates also assumed prominent leadership positions at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, where representatives from the Maldives and Vanuatu were elected vice presidents to the conference. Representatives from Tuvalu and Nauru were asked to be the first to sign the 1992 FCCC (Shibuya 1996).

Ambassador Tuiloma Neroni Slade of Samoa led AOSIS at the first Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention in Berlin in 1995. There the AOSIS membership formed a partnership with the majority of the G77/China in support of the AOSIS protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Ambassador Slade was the Chair of AOSIS from 1997-2002. In 2003, he was appointed as a judge to sit on the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The third strategy is to influence decisions through the rules of procedure. UN dialogue and negotiations provide opportunities to shape roles and rules that support more visible and open decision-making. For example, the parties may agree to obligations that differ for different categories of parties, such as industrialized and developing. Goals may expand to include not only short-term economic interests, but also long-term development needs. In effect, the parties are cooperating to realign power relationships. With greater understanding of the rules of procedure, low-power delegates are able to influence the mechanisms of policy making.

It is significant to note that AOSIS was the first political group to propose a protocol response to climate warming. Following the 1992 Earth Summit, AOSIS submitted a draft protocol for the reduction of greenhouse gases. Documented evidence is found in the 1994 AOSIS position paper submitted to the Eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee: "Draft Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change". Through the draft protocol, AOSIS attempted to build a consensus for a 20 percent reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions of Annex I (industrialized) Parties from 1990 levels by 2005. This initiative launched a series of intensive negotiations that resulted in the Kyoto Protocol (1997), in which Annex I nations agreed to reduce overall emission of six greenhouse gases by at least 5% below 1990 levels. These strategic interests are discussed in more detail in the framework analysis below.

Management

AOSIS delegates proactively lead efforts to *prevent* and *transform* the risks associated with climate warming. However, there are few indications that small island leaders attempt to manage the complex dynamics of UN negotiations. In fact, research indicates that multilateral negotiations are difficult for any nation-state to manage (Zartman 1994).

Management is a finite, time-bound exercise of control over people and resources.

Features include balancing authority and responsibility; managing time; controlling finances; and assuring that qualified people can excel. In the context of climate warming, how do managers balance short-term economic benefits and long-term development priorities?

Pacific island states address regional ecosystem management through networks that include the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and Small Island Development States Network (SIDSnet).[13] Projects include improving the production and distribution of renewable energy, protecting biodiversity and raising standards of water and air quality. The Global Environment Fund (GEF) is the major international funding source to emerge from the 1992 Earth Summit. Other sources of funding include bilateral and private donors.

It is appropriate to search for indicators of Pacific island management practices in local domains, and this will require additional research. Questions relevant to sustainable development include:

Which local practices are sustainable? How are they managed?
Which practices are destructive? What changes are needed?
Are local initiatives encouraged? What are the incentives?
What are the benefits of external donor interventions? What are the risks?
How are external donor funds managed? Who gains? Who loses?
Do women and men participate equally in managing projects and in the benefits?

Framework Analysis

UN multilateral negotiations provide opportunities for low power parties to proactively address their own needs. A significant example is "The 1994 AOSIS "Draft Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change", introduced above. A careful examination of this position paper provides additional information about the diplomatic strategies and contributions of small island states. The statements in this paper have been examined using content analysis, which is a methodology that transforms statements into codes that can be compared and analyzed.

The systems framework[14] (Figure 1) organizes coded statements according to three dimensions of empowerment. Symbolic power is concerned with building understandings, principles of action, purpose and commitments. Social power addresses the need for rules and roles that support predictability, accountability and the regulation of threats. Material power refers to natural resource, economic, technical, financial, and other observable benefits.

In the 3x3 framework matrix below, these dimensions of power are associated with three levels of flexibility in relationships. Collaboration is the highest level of integration, implying a unifying core. Cooperation is a level of integration that values equity among groups with common yet differentiated resources, needs and obligations. In climate change negotiations, these are the industrialized Annex I and developing countries. Coordination and competition are distributive relationships. Coordination places value on equality and harmonization. Competition is a relationship that involves relative or unequal gains.

[13] SIDSnet updates are available at: www. sidsnet.org SPREP is available at www.sprep.org.ws

[14] "Flexible Multilateral Systems" is adapted from the *Conflict Resolution Systems Framework* (Larson 2001).

Thus, the framework offers nine general categories of multilateral solutions. These alternatives assume that parties prefer differing relationships, depending on the substantive issue or dimension of power under consideration. Countries may agree to collaborate to increase scientific knowledge about climate warming, cooperate to improve shared water resources, and at the same time, the countries are in competition for scarce economic resources.

Flexible Multilateral Systems

	Symbolic Power	***Social Power***	***Material Power***	
International Collaboration	**Build common global concerns & understandings 28.6%**	**Centralize laws in the UN, with sanctions 0%**	**Establish core UN funding 1%**	
Inter-group Cooperation	**Acknowledge equitable rights & obligations 9.2%**	**Establish fair roles and rules 44.9%**	**Develop equitable transfer or exchanges of resources 4.1%**	**=58.2 %**
National Coordination / Competition	**Affirm sovereign rights & value relative gains 1.0%**	**Affirm sovereign authority & responsibility 11.2%**	**Foster mutual gains and competitive interests 0%**	

Figure 1: Strategic Interests of AOSIS in 1994 Draft Protocol

Figure 1 shows the percentage of statements in the 1994 AOSIS draft protocol coded in each of the nine categories of the multilateral systems framework. It indicates that, overall, the small island states give priority to cooperative approaches. By adding the percentages in the three categories of "Inter-group Cooperation", we find that 58.2% of the statements in the draft protocol advance equitable relationships among industrialized and developing countries. A more detailed examination indicates that AOSIS emphasizes four strategic interests:

1)*Cooperation to develop fair roles and rules*: 44.9% of the statements in the document address rules of procedure. They prescribe roles of authority, flexible dispute resolution mechanisms, open negotiation processes, and visible decision-making systems. An example: "The Parties shall make every effort to reach agreement on any proposed amendments to the Protocol by consensus. If all efforts at consensus have been exhausted, and no agreement reached, the amendment shall at last resort be adopted by two-thirds majority vote of the parties present and voting at the meeting." (Article 10)

2)*Collaboration to build common global concerns and understandings*: Another high priority is developing symbolic knowledge, which provides a rationale for action. 28.6% of the statements in the draft protocol propose collaborative international access to scientific research, information and other forms of fact-finding. Article 4 discusses information sharing: "The mechanism shall be open to participation by all Parties to this Protocol and shall be multidisciplinary. It shall comprise governmental representatives competent in the relevant field of expertise. It shall report regularly to the Meeting of the Parties in all aspects of its work."

3)*Coordination to protect sovereign authority and responsibility:* 11.2% of the statements reinforce sovereign roles and obligations. Article 13 includes an example: "Each party to the Protocol shall have one vote, except as provided for in paragraph 2 below."

4)*Cooperation to advance equitable rights and obligations*: 9.2% of the statements support principles of equity. Example: "Article 3 of the Convention requires developed country Parties to take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof," (Preamble)

To summarize, the 1994 draft protocol shows that AOSIS is an advocate for flexible, non-coercive solutions to climate warming. The AOSIS position paper advances understandings, common concerns, principles of action, and collaboration in research and other forms of fact finding. The purpose is to raise awareness and challenge basic assumptions about global inter-relationships and their harmful effects. As noted earlier, these contributions are designed to prevent harm. The formation of a rationale for action is not enough. Symbolic proposals are followed by practical prescriptions designed to regulate social practices and influence norms. These include dispute resolution mechanisms, decision-making procedures and targets. These social prescriptions have the potential to transform power relations.

Few AOSIS propositions address considerations related to the management of economics, technologies or finances. Small island nations do not have control over these material resources. Notably, 4.1% of the statements in this 1994 position paper do focus on equitable exchanges of technologies and capabilities. AOSIS proposes that the transfer of technologies, practice and processes take place under "fair and most favorable conditions" (Article 7).

It is significant that AOSIS has not articulated the priority or need for centralized

UN command, control or authority. None (0%) of the statements in the 1994 position paper support *centralized laws with sanctions.* Inflexible approaches are thought to contribute to distrust and inefficiency. In contrast, flexible relations, such as collaboration and cooperation, are associated with inclusion, trust building, innovation and joint benefits. Within a distributive domain, which includes coordination and competition, flexibility is defined in terms of harmonizing sovereign domains or gaining the largest relative share of benefits.

Benefits of Flexibility

Joseph Nye has coined the term "soft power" to describe the benefits of flexible approaches. In his view, persuasion is more effective than coercion, particularly when dealing with critical global issues that require multilateral cooperation. Nye argues that countries obtain more constructive outcomes in world politics from attractiveness of their political ideals, policies and cultures than from sanctions or force. When others understand and respect values they are willing to consider the legitimacy of specific objectives (2004). In other words, flexible and persuasive approaches attract and appeal more generally than inflexible "hard power" strategies.

It has been argued that low-power groups are strong advocates for persuasive and cooperative approaches because they have no alternatives. Robert Kagan (2003) proposes that weaker powers advance cooperative multilateral approaches out of self-interest. He notes that when political groups lack the capacity to undertake unilateral actions individually, it is natural that they should support multilateral action to address international security interests.

In response, scientists and field practitioners argue for the necessity of multilateral cooperation to address the systems threats of HIV/AIDS and the degradation of the environment. As demonstrated by the nine alternatives in the systems framework, multilateral flexibility allows parties to acknowledge shared concerns, address self-interests and create mutual benefits, at the same time.

Within fragile and interdependent ecosystems, cooperative strategies are a viable alternative to confrontational diplomacy. All nations benefit from more flexible, inclusive and cooperative approaches. For example, in the negotiation of the Ozone Accords, bargaining impasses were broken through "a combination of diplomatic skill and leadership and the invention of novel bridging proposals, which not only appealed to basic principles of equity and fairness, but also allowed for new political coalitions to form" (Hampson 1995: 263).

Ironically, within the United States, which has rejected the Kyoto Protocol, the benefits of flexibility are surfacing at a domestic level. Public, independent and private organizations within the country are responding to the global indicators of climate warming and taking responsible action. Lacking centralized federal leadership:

- 132 U.S. city mayors, including those representing Los Angeles, New York City, New Orleans and Seattle, have agreed to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide in their cities to meet the main target of the Kyoto Protocol—a reduction in greenhouse gases to less than 7% of 1990 emissions—by 2015 (Buncombe 2005).

- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that California has established

targets to cut global warming-related emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. California has a record of enacting environmental rules that are followed by other states, the federal government of the United States and other nations. Within California, some politicians argue that the plan does not go far enough (The Wall Street Journal 2005).

- U.S. investor activists (composed mostly of religious orders) have purchased shares of Exxon Mobil Corporation, the worlds largest publicly traded oil company in market value, to propose more responsible practices. Their shareholder resolution on climate-related concerns and obligations won a surprising 22.2% of shareholder support in 2003. Overruling objections from the Exxon Mobil Corp., the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has agreed to allow shareholders to vote on two additional climate-related resolutions. One requires the oil company to disclose more information about how it plans to reduce its emissions at facilities in countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol. The other resolution requires it to disclose the research data behind the company's stated position the science is "inconclusive" on climate warming (Ball 2005).

These corporate shareholders and employees are taking proactive leadership roles to transform irresponsible policies and practices, and oil companies are discovering the advantages of environmental precautions. Economically, it is cheaper to build a clean facility than to pay the expense of environmental a disaster or retrofit that facility later when government standards are raised. Corporate social responsibility offers multiple benefits: protecting common resources, developing social opportunities, and advancing the economic interests of the corporation. Oil companies such as BP ("Beyond Petroleum") have discovered that an environmentally responsible reputation gives them a competitive advantage. In Papua New Guinea, for example, there are reports that Chevron has implemented rigid environmental safeguards in the Kutubu oil fields. Employees at Chevron believe that the new emphasis on environmental responsibility has been a major advantage in winning a contract to develop an oil/gas field in the North Sea, as the Norwegian government and people place a high priority on environmental protection (Diamond 2005).

Conclusion

Island populations face some of the highest risks from climate warming, including rising sea levels, increases in cyclone wind speeds and damaging storm surges. Concerns about these destructive effects have motivated the small island countries to engage in UN multilateral negotiations. Pacific island diplomats have not been passive observers of others' international decision making. Given the opportunity to participate in UN deliberations, small island delegates proactively take leadership roles to advance their objectives. They are able to strengthen their positions with the support of partner groups, including developing countries and non-government organizations with similar needs, values and interests.

The participation of small island diplomats brings the realities of vulnerable and marginalized groups to the forefront of UN climate change negotiations. Small island diplomats are consistent advocates for self-determined approaches to sustainable

development. Flexible non-confrontational strategies are at the heart of the relationship building and creative problem solving that is taking place.

This does not imply that island diplomats or any political group can unilaterally solve the complex environment and development conflicts associated with global climate warming. Instead, it demonstrates that low-power diplomats are able to take proactive leadership roles, and that they contribute to the ecological security needs and strategic interests of vulnerable populations and, ultimately, the international system as a whole.

While much progress has been made through multilateral cooperation, significant challenges remain, including: How to deal with empty rhetoric and non-compliance? How to balance short-term economic growth with long-term community health and environmental needs? How to realign investments in "security" from military hardware to clean energy? How to assure the optimal synergies between mitigation and adaptation?

Pacific island diplomats are strong advocates for flexible, mutually beneficial solution models. They have used the forum of multilateral diplomacy to appeal for strategic investments in energy efficiency, the protection of air and water resources, and economic growth. Sustainable priorities are designed to build local capacities for regional cooperation and the development of technical resources.

The long-term objective is to protect present and future generations from the destructive impacts of climate warming. A global shift in understandings and practices is taking place incrementally, through science and diplomacy. Each opportunity to raise public understanding, each consensual agreement, and each constructive investment is a significant contribution to ecological security. The aim is to strengthen local resilience and the long-term stability within the global system as a whole. Systems theory recognizes the power of strategic interventions: small effects become magnified when conditions are right.

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