Convention on Biological Diversity

Islands are often characterized by a very rich biodiversity, upon which local people rely economically. Island ecosystems are also very fragile. An estimated **75% OF ANIMAL SPECIES AND 90% OF BIRD SPECIES** that have become extinct since the 17th century are insular. Furthermore, 23% of island species are at present considered **ENDANGERED**, whereas the corresponding figure for the rest of the world is 11%.

# ISLAND BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE** because island species populations tend to be small, localized, and highly specialized, and thus can easily be driven to extinction; Coral reefs, which provide a number of services to island people, are highly sensitive to temperature and chemical changes in seawater.

In addition, **SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES** are particularly **VULNERABLE** to climate change because of their physical, socio-political and economic characteristics.

The main threats to island ecosystems are the observed and **PROJECTED RISE IN SEA LEVEL** and the **POTENTIAL INCREASE IN THE FREQUENCY OF STORMS.**

**GLOBAL AVERAGE SEA LEVEL RISE** at the end of the 21st century (2090-2099) is projected to range **BETWEEN 0.18 AND 0.59 METRES.** The Lateu settlement, located in the Pacific island chain of Vanuatu, was recently relocated to escape rising sea levels. Inhabitants of the islands are now referred to as the first **CLIMATE CHANGE "REFUGEES".**

Many island ecosystem components provide vital goods and services, such as protection against extreme climatic events, while also providing habitat for marine animals and reef fish. Thus the conservation of island biodiversity represents a cost-effective and practical way for islands to adapt to climate change.