**SMALL ISLANDS: BIG ISSUES**

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**NARRATION:**
Precious outposts of humanity, scattered across the vastness of Earth's oceans and seas...
Testimony to the diversity of life and experience and culture...
Pioneers in the search for a way towards a sustainable future...
They are the frontline of our changing view of the environment, and our evolving stewardship of a fragile nature...

(30")
00:45  MARCHING BAND

NARRATION:
Each weekday morning, the police of Western Samoa turn out on parade in the capital, Apia. Samoa, in the South Pacific, gained its political independence a generation ago. But like other small island communities across the globe, Samoa has found that efforts to develop its society are all too often hostage to forces beyond its control. (21")

01:20  STREET SCENES

In common with islanders everywhere, the 165,000 Samoans have a special sense of belonging. Isolated by the ocean, they were self sufficient by geographical circumstance. But increasingly, the outside world, of man and nature, is undermining this tradition of self reliance. (17")
Nowhere is the vulnerability more evident than in the effect of climate. Nature brings not just beauty and bounty, but also raw, terrifying force. (10")

In the past five years, the Samoan islands have been hit by not just one, but by two cyclones of unprecedented ferocity. (8")

Sweeping across the South Pacific, they struck with frightening power, leaving a trail of death and nearly half a billion dollars worth of devastation. Eighty per cent of the structures on the islands were destroyed or damaged. Forests felled. Tree crops wiped out. Lives shattered. (23")

At the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the issue of sustainable development is one of the highest priorities. The
cyclones have highlighted an ominous question, one that concerns island communities everywhere. (13")

"There is a perception that weather is changing in the Pacific, that there is an increased frequency and intensity of storm events, cyclones and high winds, and that bring with it storm surges which can be just as damaging as the high winds themselves." (19")

Are these climate changes caused by global warming, perhaps unleashed by man-made hot house gases from faraway automobiles and factories? While scientists debate the issue, a weather expert in Samoa warns his people to be on their guard. (14")
"If I'm talking to my fellow Samoan colleague, I would very much talk to him in terms of preparatory measures for more cyclones." (11")

For Samoa, and for all island communities facing the prospect of global climate change, the impact is as much psychological as physical. A shadow of uncertainty has been thrown across daily life. Confidence has been shaken and with it people's faith in the future. (23")

"They are scared now. They are still scared. They are worried. They don't know what to do. As you can see also: low level, (9")
VOICE OVER

nothing to protect them. The houses are near. You can see how they built their house. When there comes those high -- those high waves coming in -- there is nothing to protect them. So, people still worry." (14")

NARRATION:

Despite all the uncertainties, Samoa is putting the pieces back together as best it can. Some of the damage is invisible. Marine life destroyed along the nation's coral reefs. Marine biologists are helping nature recover in a programme to reseed clam nurseries. Small clam seedlings, acquired in Fiji, are placed on underwater trays. If all goes to plan, they'll grow to marketable, and exportable size in three years. Clams like this will once again tempt seafood lovers' palates. (42")
In the wake of the storms, even traditional structures — like this fale or meeting house — have to meet stricter construction codes. But many Samoans can't afford cyclone proof techniques, and insurance companies have tightened their requirements. (14")

At the dock where ferries ply between Samoa's two main islands, an unprecedented quarantine. Agricultural inspectors search passengers and vehicles for taro plants — the country's main staple crop and export. (14")

"We advertise on radio, and in local papers and TV Samoa, for the people to be aware of the fact that they are not supposed to bring this prohibited stuff to the wharf and try to smuggle over to Savai'i. (12")
06:43  SEARCHING THINGS IN BOX

VOICE OVER
So, that's the reason why we are searching all bags. But you know people. People are people. There are always some that will go against the rules and regulations. (8")

06:56  DOCK

NARRATION:
It's an emergency measure to restrict the spread of a bright that has infested the root crop. (4")

07:03  FARMER

A larger continental community might shrug off the set back to a single plant. But with its narrow range of options, the blight is a body blow to a small island economy. (10")

07:16  SUPERED SUBTITLE:
"Taro at the moment is very worrying for all of us. Well, most of the farmers depend on the money from the taro, but, at the
moment, they don't earn enough anymore. (13"

VOICE OVER

We have to think about growing other crops you know, apart from taro -- cause, at the moment, we don't depend on taro anymore. We don't get any money from taro anymore." (8"

NARRATION:

In Samoa, taro is a crucial part of the daily diet. It takes the place of imported rice and wheat. The blight means less taro in the market and a decrease in farmer's incomes. And the fungus in the root crop has larger and more serious implications for the nation's trading position. (18"
"The devastating impact on our economy will be: the import substitution effect of taro; the increase in rice and flour exports for baking bread -- those normal substitutes for taro. So, there'll be a tremendous strain on our overseas exchange.

(15")

Samoa's dependency on a small range of exports, is matched by its demand for imports. Like all island communities, it relies on products from abroad. (9")

"This is a possibly typical supermarket setting in a small island state. (6")
VOICE OVER
We are largely dependent on, particularly for manufactured goods, on imports. Comparative advantage dictates, in most of these instances, that they are produced much more efficiently overseas, and we'd only be passing on a greater burden to our consumers if we tried to produce them locally."

(18")

NARRATION:
For Samoa, and 40 developing island states and territories around the world, the issues are not just economic. Also at stake is the preservation of cultures. Island people are being drawn into an interdependent world.

(14")

All these concerns were brought to Bridgetown, capital of the Caribbean Island Nation,
Barbados, venue for a conference devoted to the problems of islands. Part of the search for a partnership between rich and poor countries: to chart a development strategy for the future. (16")

The first global conference after the Rio Earth Summit, it provides an opportunity for the commitments made in Rio to be put into action. It's also the first time that island nations, and representatives of other countries, have gathered to discuss the front line status of islands in the search for sustainable progress. (17")

"The United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States comes as an important
moment in the history of development..."

NARRATION:
Island communities share their experiences in addressing common problems. As the starting point in the follow up to the Rio Conference, islands are a test case. If the concept of sustainable development is to be put into practice, islands, with their well defined needs and problems, should be an ideal place to start. The search is for policies that balance the needs of development with the preservation of the environment.

The choice of Barbados to host the Conference is an appropriate one. Like Samoa in the Pacific, this Caribbean nation faces both nature's unpredictable forces and manmade economic challenges.
Every day, as the sun sets on the West Coast, fishermen gather for a familiar ritual. But the game of dominoes at John Moore's rum shop is literally being undermined -- by the sea. The remorseless waves of a recent storm have eaten up the foundations of buildings.

Government regulations now prohibit the rebuilding of structures on such vulnerable sites.

"We had a lot of beach all along there. Coconut trees, all sorts of trees was there -- all down there."

After the storm eroded the coast, engineers put more sand on the beach and built a breakwater.
VOICEOVER

...Moving from here -- oh no,...

SYNC

...this is a landmark you know.
This is John Moore's shop."(3")

NARRATION:

Barbados is one of the first nations in the Caribbean to introduce this idea of conscious planning of coastal resources. It's one of the key issues facing island states. At one level, it's an issue of engineering. The popular Accra beach is one of a hundred sites around the island incorporated in a Masterplan which will constantly monitor the shore for signs of erosion and changes in wave patterns.

(25")
"We combine both the results of the physical modelling and the numerical modelling to come up with the best orientation of the breakwater,..."

...the best design for the groyne, the ideal depth of water, the ideal height of the breakwater and all the parameters for the breakwater. Since the construction of the offshore breakwater, there has been large numbers of fish moving towards the breakwater, and you've seen some of the underwater photographs of that as well, showing literally, thousands of fish thronged in the area."

Fishing is another vital coastal resource that needs careful
management. Island states are now stewards of the 200 mile exclusive economic zone established by the UN Law of the Sea Treaty. They are guardians of much of the world's fishing resources. Barbadians, like fishermen in many island countries, are facing the problems of overfishing and degradation of marine environments. One reason is the destruction of the island's reefs. Careless fishing which even included the use of dynamite in the past have played a part. The marine balance has been disturbed. As a result, even flying fish, the country's national symbol, have become rare.

And mankind's activities on the land itself are despoiling the coasts. Run off from oil facilities, wastes from rum
factories and sewage find their way into the sea. All this pollution is another factor behind reduced fish stocks. (15")

SYNC

"Today I caught about four pounds of fish, which was a very bad day for me -- not a very good day at all. (5")

VOICE OVER

Normally -- sometimes you know -- you go out and you take up one pot and you normally catch about say 40, 50 pounds of fish. For the past 20 years, I've been noticing the reefs have been deteriorating. There is no reef along this area at all. There is mostly sand; scarcely any fish. Another thing is that I've noticed that a lot of oil is coming out of the water from the gutters -- you notice, running from the streets. You can see it
on the water. Especially when rain falls, you can see a lot of oil on the water." (29")

NARRATION:
And then there's tourism, the biggest foreign income earner for many island states. For Caribbean nations, it's a ten billion dollar a year industry. Islands are aware there has to be careful planning to ensure present needs are met without jeopardising the enjoyment of future generations. (23")

But golf courses are still built on prime agricultural land. Is this the best way to promote the visitor industry? (7")

VOICEOVER - BILL HOAD
"This section, here, running through these 9 holes, will be the residential areas. And, to
the south, there will be just 18 holes of golf, looking right down to the ocean.... (11")

SYNC

...Nine holes of the course should be ready for December this year, and the further 9 between April and May, next year." (8")

NARRATION:

Are developments for wealthy visitors the only future of tourism? Not necessarily. This nature walk on the coast of Barbados is an example of the fastest growing sector in world tourism. Ecotourism, a type of tourism that's more friendly to the environment. (20")

SYNC

"And, the first thing about this cactus is that you can eat the
fruits of it, and there is a fruit cut open for you to see, and you can all eat a little bit..."  

NARRATION:

As well as being educational, the walks also allow tourists to meet local people outside the artificial world of the tourist ghettoes.

VOICEOVER - BILL HOAD

"Increasingly, we are seeing visitors coming..."  

SYNC

...on the walks, but that prime target is Barbadians to try and help them to understand their country. And when you understand something, you start to love it.
And when you love something, you start to look after it. And we are seeing that the walks have become a pivotal point in the development of the island's interest and the whole question of preservation and sustainable development."

NARRATION:
The sea is also a place where more adventurous visitors can see and experience nature. Divers can see for themselves the rich biodiversity of the underwater world.
The coastal waters around islands are storehouses of coral and animal species. But the pressure of tourism in recent years -- in Barbados and many other places -- has eroded the precious resources of the reefs.

Black coral has almost vanished from Barbados's reef, but can
easily be found in curio shops. With a 25 per cent unemployment rate, the sale of lumps of coral is one way to get a slice of the tourist action. Selling out the beauty of the island for a fraction of its worth. (52")

18:10 DIALOGUE BETWEEN MERCHANT & CLIENTS

"That is 15 Barbados (dollars). It's nice. It's the black coral."

"What is this made from. Is it red coral? Yeah?"

18:23 SUPERED SUBTITLE: ADRIAN PHILLIPS CORAL SELLER - ON CAMERA

"This coral that we're all talking about right here, flower coral and brain coral, is what I do for a living. This is what I support my family on -- you know, support my kids and my food and stuff like that."
18:33  CORALS

VOICE OVER
Coral is good for fish tanks. Coral is good for people that work in offices, right? You can use it for paper weight. (4")

SYNC
Coral is so good, right, that you don't have to dust it. You can wash it. You can put it on your coffee table --right? You can make it for gifts." (20")

18:44  WHITE CORAL

NARRATION:
And it's not just locals who must adopt a new attitude. Visitors too have to learn to look at islands in a new way. (6")

SYNC
"By educating the tourists and locals, now they understand how important corals are to us, and they're not just gonna go down and pick up corals because they are pretty, or pick them up to
sell. At least, we hope that's what's going to happen." (11")

NARRATION:

Instead of buying lumps of coral to take home, destroying the reef, there are other ways tourists can get an unforgettable experience. It's a unique view of a natural attraction that, if conservation measures succeed, will slowly regenerate over the next decades. First signs of recovery are already visible. The tourist submarine passes a ship deliberately sunk to provide a habitat for coral to grow on. The hope is that, in years to come, marine life will flourish once again. (43")

The Maldive Islands, nearly 1200 tiny atolls scattered across 750 kilometres of the Indian Ocean. Here too, the ocean is the greatest asset -- and the
The people of the Maldives have always made their living from the sea. In the past, it was cowry shells, prized by Arab traders who used the shells as currency. Today, fish are the largest commodity export. But it's a meagre livelihood, with income per head of little more than 400 dollars a year. Poor soil and a small land area severely limit local agriculture. The Maldives are an extreme example of import dependence -- 90 per cent of food has to be imported. Even construction materials have to come from overseas.
Drinking water is imported too. In the capital, Male, a fast growing population has depleted much of the ground water. Maldivians learn early to regard collected rain water as a precious gift. (17")

"We find that since our islands are very small, the aquifer is getting depleted as population is increasing. And in the island of the capital the situation is very grave... (10")

...People have realized that water is a scarce commodity. We find out from our tap base that people are taking out only 14 litres per capita per day, which is very considerable. And they take this water for all their cooking, drinking, and sometimes to spray it on their bodies after
having a bath using ground water." (23")

NARRATION:

22:42 DESALINATION PLANT  With help from Europe, one technical solution is a desalination plant to make fresh water from the sea. (7")

SYNC

22:52 RASHEED ON CAMERA  "Desalination has to come in a big way to supplement our requirement. (3")
VOICE OVER

The desalinated water and rain harvested is not sufficient for all our purposes in the capitol island." (5")

NARRATION:

But can technology also fend off the threat of inundation by the ocean? The Maldives are perilously low lying -- and a sea level rise of only half a centimetre a year could have devastating consequences. (12")

SYNC

"We are fearing the ocean now. And we are still dependent on the ocean, too, because it provides our economy. It is the fabric of our society, of our social way of life. But things beyond our control are now posing threats -- like in the way of sea level rise... (22")
If you consider the breakwaters we have in Male, providing such, even on a regular of 50 islands, is going to cost us about $6 billion. This is an enormous amount. Yet, we don't know how effective these systems will be."

(17")

On the main island, 65 thousand people are crammed onto one square mile. Environmental problems are inevitable. The town generates 28 tons of garbage every day, and they've run out of space to dump it. These days, garbage trucks collect the capital's waste and bring it aboard a ferry boat. It's a short ride across the lagoon to the shallow waters of Male's airport island. (35")
These are the only hills higher than two metres on the whole of the Maldives. And they are manmade -- from garbage. Male, seen across the lagoon, is already overcrowded. Some 30 thousand people, half of Male's households, have applied for resettlement elsewhere. When the ocean is the limit, radical solutions like this are needed.

(22")

"The islands didn't exist at all, and was created through the waste disposal system, and the project was UNDP funded. And it tries to solve two problems at the same time. One is the waste disposal in overcrowded Male, and the other is land creation."

(17")
NARRATION:

This outlying tourist atoll seems light years away from worries of waste disposal. Every year, 200 thousand tourists come to the Maldives, seeking one of the last paradises on Earth. (12")

But even in paradise, tourists do think about garbage. Dunya and Natascha from Germany carefully stuff used materials in a bag provided by their airline. (10")

"People today, I think, are getting more and more conscious about the necessity to protect not only their own environment, but for the whole world, especially with the repeat... (10")

...clients who come to the Maldives, who see what's
happening to the Maldives in the last few years, and they are getting more concerned about keeping it cleaner for the future."

**NARRATION:**

And when the visitors leave, they take away more than just souvenirs and memories. Neatly washed and packed, their garbage goes with them on the plane to be recycled back in Germany. The airline, LTU, estimates that 80 per cent of its passengers take part in the programme. It's a small, but more than symbolic example, of how people are starting to see small island developing communities as places that need extra attention.

Around the world, islanders -- and island lovers -- are taking a new look at how to protect these
unique eco-systems and develop their human potential. Be it the Maldives in the Indian Ocean, or Barbados in the Caribbean, or Samoa in the South Pacific, the scores of small island developing states and territories face the challenges of sustainable development. Islands are the first to feel the force of global environmental problems -- problems that will eventually change all our lives. The future of paradise lies in our hands and in our hearts. (36")

27:52 BLACK Music

27:54 CLOSING TITLES Music

28:26 FADE TO BLACK END