

OUR ENVIRONMENT OUR HERITAGE

Getting Ready For The Day After Tomorrow

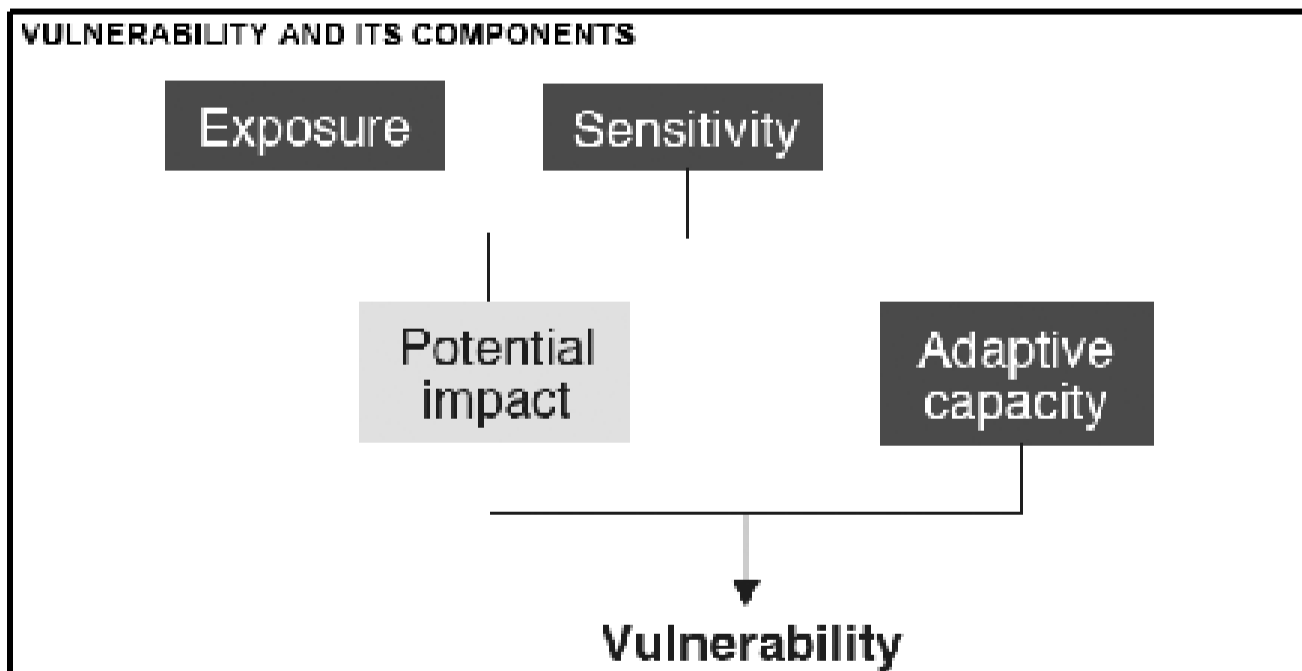
In the Hollywood blockbuster, *The Day After Tomorrow*, we were given an exaggerated snapshot of what the world can expect from climate change. The filmmakers let their imaginations run wild, turning New York into a frozen wasteland and US citizens into "climate refugees", forced to flee across the border into Mexico. While this ironic twist on the climate change issue was highly entertaining, it is important not to let fiction get in the way of fact. After all, the true story of climate change is entertaining enough, if not a little scary!

CLIMATE CHANGE!

In recent years it has become apparent that some level of climate change is inevitable, as a result of global warming caused by unmitigated greenhouse gas emissions over the last 200 years. That is, even with serious reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the world will not be able to avoid the effects of climate change. This means that countries must immediately begin taking steps to adapt to climate change.

This does not mean that we should stop reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, while some level of climate change is inevitable, it will be a lot worse if nothing is done to curb greenhouse gas pollution. What we need is a two-pronged approach: reducing emissions while also adapting to the effects of climate change.

While it is true that all countries, including the US, are at risk because of climate change, some countries are more vulnerable than others. This vulnerability is determined by two factors: the potential impact of climate change for a country and its capacity to adapt to these impacts. This is summarised in the diagram, below:



HOW VULNERABLE IS SAMOA?

To answer this question, we must first look at the potential impacts of climate change for Samoa. Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, as well as rising sealevels are expected to have number of impacts for Samoa, including:

- Increased frequency and intensity of storms and cyclones;
- Damage to the coral reef;
- Coastal erosion;

- Coastal erosion;
- Salinisation of coastal springs and groundwater;
- Changes to agricultural productivity; and
- Loss of native species and ecosystems.

As a small island state, Samoa is particularly sensitive to these effects, especially sea level rise. While there is no chance that Samoa will disappear, as may be the case with Tuvalu and Tokelau, Samoa is still at risk of sea level rise. This is because nearly all of the country's infrastructure and population is located in the coastal zone. Thus, any loss of land along the coastline will threaten everyone's livelihood, not to mention the national economy.

ASSESSING SAMOA'S VULNERABILITY

In assessing Samoa's vulnerability to climate change, we must also consider the adaptive capacity of the country. That is, the ability of the country to adapt to the changes that will occur as a result of climate change. Adaptive capacity is determined by the resources available to Samoa, including

in the past when faced with challenges. Indeed, to a large degree, Samoa's capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change will depend on each village being prepared for the changes ahead.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are some things you and your village can do to prepare for the impacts of climate change:

- Learn more about what climate change means for your village.
- Raise awareness amongst the people in your village to ensure they understand the consequences of climate change. This includes all levels of the community, especially the individuals and committees responsible for village affairs.
- Repair coastal springs to protect them from rising sealevels.
- Plant native vegetation along the coastline to help protect against erosion.
- Look after the reef to ensure it is healthy and clean, as this will help protect it against rising sealevels and increasing water temperatures.

The government is also working to improve Samoa's adaptive capacity, through the preparation of the National Adaptation Programme of Action. This document, which is currently in draft form, will set the direction for Samoa's adaptation programme, highlighting key areas for action in the coming years.



To find out more about this important issue, contact the our Meteorology Section at Mulinuu, on 20855.

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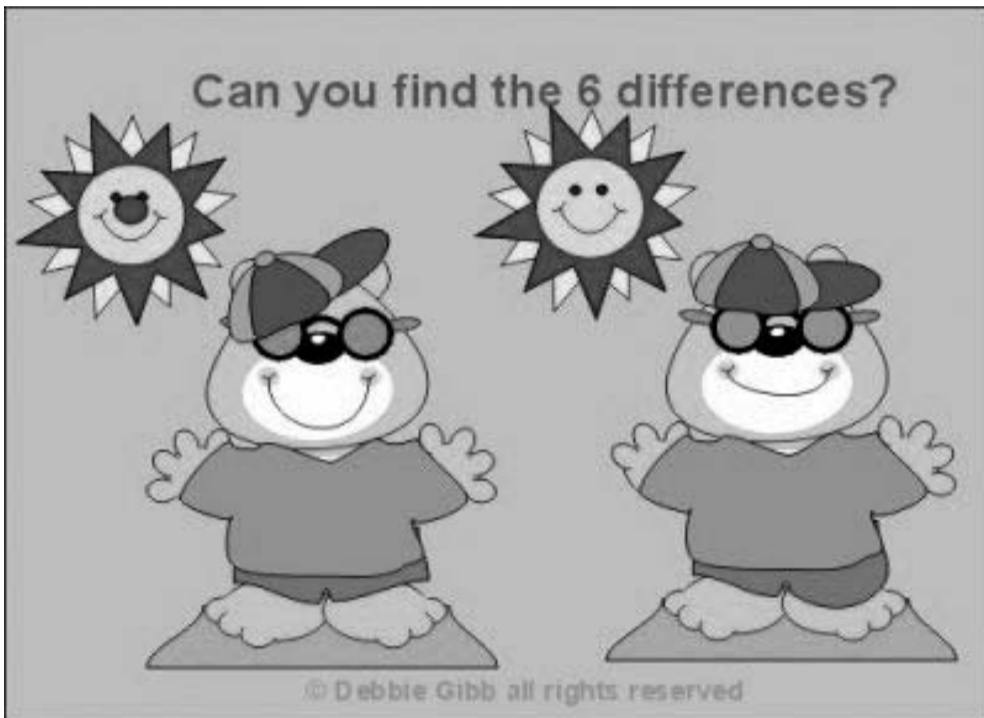


Children's Corner

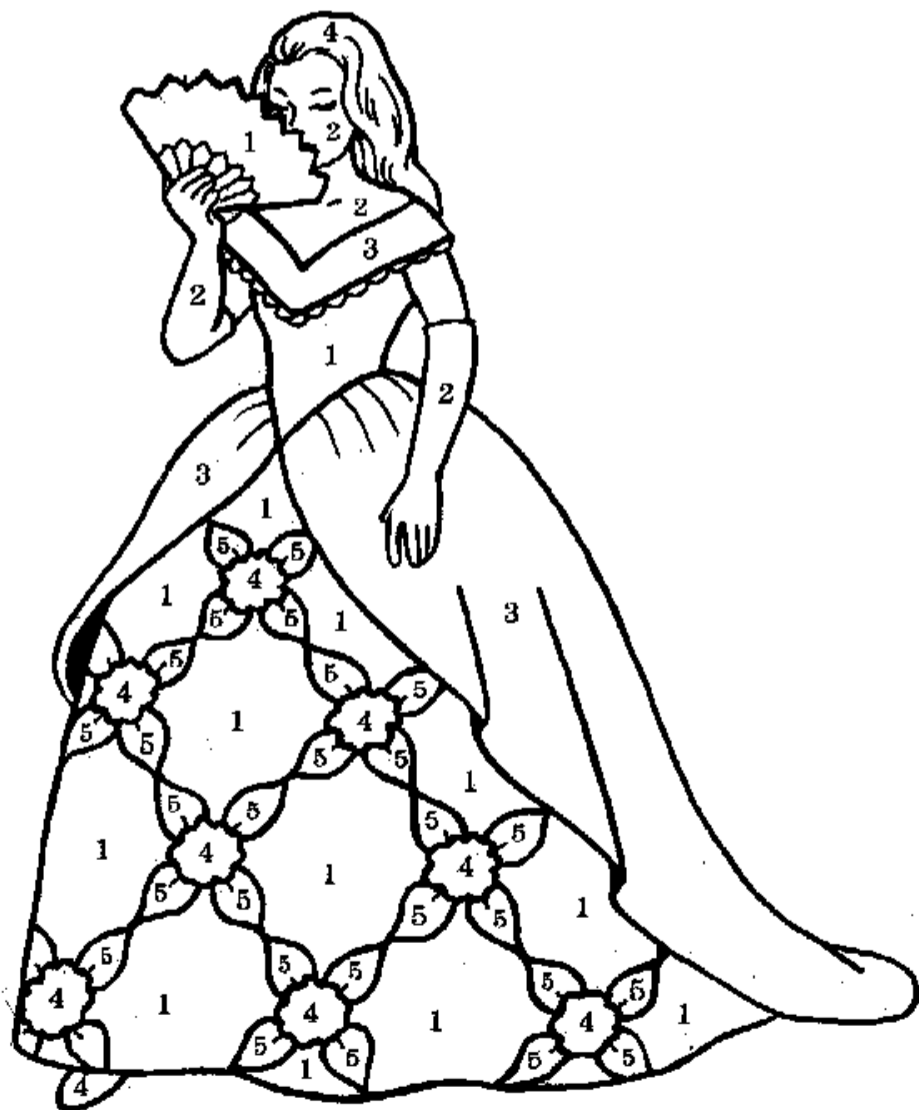


Children aged 9-15 are invited to answer the following corner. The name of 3 students with top scores at the end of every month will be posted under the "Children's Corner" for special prizes. "2008 Young Environmentalist Star Awards" will be given to 10 students with top total scores at the end of the year.

FIND THE DIFFERENCES



COLOR BY NUMBERS



1. RED 2. PINK 3. PURPLE
4. YELLOW 5. GREEN

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What does "adaptive capacity" mean?
2. What are some of the predicted impacts of climate change for Samoa?
3. How can your village prepare for the impacts of climate change?

FILL IN THE GAPS

In recent years it has become apparent that some level of _____ is inevitable, as a result of _____ caused by unmitigated greenhouse gas emissions over the last 200 years. That is, even with serious _____ in greenhouse gas emissions, the world will not be able to avoid the effects of climate change. This means that countries must immediately begin taking steps to _____ to climate change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following companies for sponsoring our children's corner prizes

- STRICKLAND BROS

- DIGICEL

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The Bigger. Better Network.

- McDONALD'S RESTAURANT

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