



# The Island President

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# Using this Guide



**Community Cinema** is a rare public forum: a space for people to gather who are connected by a love of stories, and a belief in their power to change the world. This discussion guide is designed as a tool to facilitate dialogue, and deepen understanding of the complex issues in the film *The Island President*. It is also an invitation to not only sit back and enjoy the show—but to step up and take action. This guide is not meant to be a comprehensive primer on a given topic. Rather, it provides important context, and raises thought provoking questions to encourage viewers to think more deeply. We provide suggestions for areas to explore in panel discussions, in the classroom, in communities, and online. We also provide valuable resources, and connections to organizations on the ground that are fighting to make a difference.

For information about the program, visit [www.communitycinema.org](http://www.communitycinema.org)



# From the Filmmaker

Mohamed Nasheed is a one-in-a-billion person. At the young age of 44, he has already spent 20 years fighting for truth, justice, and democracy in his home country of Maldives. He has suffered for years as a political prisoner, became his country's first democratically elected president, profoundly changed the international politics of climate change, and, most recently, been evicted from office at gunpoint.

I first heard about Nasheed in October 2008, when he had just won the presidency in Maldives. When he stepped into office, he immediately took on the challenge of climate change with provocative, brutally honest statements such as “The Maldives will soon be looking for a new homeland” for its people because the island nation (the lowest-lying in the world) would inevitably go under water. The light bulb that went off in my mind was “The climate debate is not a boring story about science, it’s one of the most profound, dramatic stories in the history of humankind!” What could be more exciting than a hero trying to save the planet from the impending apocalypse?

After meeting Nasheed (or seeing him in *The Island President*), people are immediately struck by his wit, candor, and charisma. He is a man who has faced the most challenging situations – torture, solitary confinement – and refused to give up. He fights like a man who has nothing to lose. And therefore, the story of this film becomes a David-and-Goliath tale.

Visually, one could not ask for a more beautiful backdrop than Maldives. You take one look at those islands and you think to yourself, “This is absolutely gorgeous,” and a half second later you think, “They are so vulnerable. There’s no place to go when the water rises!”

We proposed to Nasheed a no-holds-barred-access film. Yet, even as we pitched him on the idea, we realized that we were asking for something virtually unheard of. No other head of state has participated in such a movie.

The president agreed to do it, I think, because he himself had a background as an activist and journalist and had used writing and the internet to move Maldives toward good governance. Also, later on (well into production), he told us (with a laugh), “I thought you would go away after a while.”

But we did not go away. We persisted. We negotiated to become part of the Maldivian delegation at Copenhagen so that our camera would not be held behind the press barricades. When faced with a bilateral meeting with another head of state, we tried to make our case, or simply continue filming, begging for understanding when asked what we were doing. It wasn’t easy, but Nasheed looked at me one day and said, “Jon, I like people who try to do impossible things,” and winked at me. I’ll never forget that. He is mischievous. He has a way of pushing people but never without a sense of humor.

Nasheed became a larger part of the international debate on climate than we ever dreamed would happen. I thought that if he went to the United Nations (UN) Climate Conference in Copenhagen, it would be as the leader of a tiny country protesting against the powerful countries. Of course, he did do that, but he was also invited into the small group of leaders who banged out the details of the final agreement. I believe – as we show in the film – that he was responsible for eking out the step forward that did take place in Copenhagen.

I don’t go to the movies to learn things I can get from books and articles. I go for the emotional journey. Traveling around the world, negotiating with India, China, and the United States, making the case for his people, Nasheed is like an action hero racing against a ticking time bomb. He inspires me to ask myself, “What can I do in my life to change things for the better? What would happen if we all asked that question every day?”



**Jon Shenk**  
Filmmaker



## The Film

*The Island President* tells the story of President Mohamed Nasheed of Maldives, a man confronting a problem greater than one any other world leader has ever faced—the literal survival of his country and everyone in it.

After leading a 20-year prodemocracy movement against the brutal regime of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and surviving repeated imprisonments and torture, Nasheed became president at 41, only to encounter a far more implacable adversary than a dictator—the ocean. Considered the lowest-lying country in the world, Maldives would be inundated with a rise of a mere three meters in sea level, rendering the country practically unlivable. Unless the larger countries of the world make dramatic changes in their greenhouse-gas emissions, Maldives, like a modern Atlantis, will disappear under the waves.

Democracy came to Maldives, a Sunni Muslim country, in 2008. What made the Maldives movement different from the ones that have followed it in the Middle East is the existence of a clear opposition party, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), whose co-founder, Nasheed, was a popular and charismatic leader ready to usher his country into democracy. Educated in Sri Lanka and England, Nasheed proved to be an unusually shrewd and sophisticated politician who grasped that the only way he could stand up to the catastrophic issues of climate change facing his country would be to take Maldives's cause to the world stage.

The film captures Nasheed's first year in office, a time when he influences the direction of international events in a way that few leaders have ever done, even in countries many times the size of Maldives. Nasheed's story culminates in his trip to the Copenhagen Climate Summit in 2009, where the film provides a rare glimpse of the political horse trading that goes on at such a top-level global assembly. Nasheed is unusually candid about revealing his strategies: leveraging Maldives's underdog position, harnessing the power of media, and overcoming deadlocks through an appeal to unity with other developing nations. Despite his country's dire situation, Nasheed remains cool, pragmatic, and flexible, willing to compromise and try again another day. When all hope fades for any kind of written accord to be signed, Nasheed

makes a stirring speech, which salvages an agreement. While many judge Copenhagen a failure, it marked the first time in history that China, India, and the United States agreed to reduce carbon emissions.

An award-winning cinematographer and director, Jon Shenk suffuses *The Island President* with the unearthly beauty of Maldives. Seen from the sky, set against the haunting music of Radiohead, the coral islands seem unreal, more like glowing iridescent creatures than geographic areas. The parallel is apt, as Maldives is as endangered as any species, and unless strong actions are taken to curb greenhouse gases (GHGs), this magical country could become extinct.

### **Selected Individuals Featured in The Island President**

**Mohamed Nasheed**—Former president of Maldives

**Ahmed Naseem**—Former political prisoner; Minister of state for foreign affairs

**Mohamed Aslam**—Oceanographer; Former minister of housing and environment

**Aminath Shauna**—Former deputy undersecretary for climate change

**Paul Roberts**—Activist; Former advisor on international media and communications

**Mark Lynas**—Former advisor on climate change

Brief biographies of these individuals, as well as others appearing in the film, are available on the film's website [theislandpresident.com](http://theislandpresident.com)



# Background Information

## Quick Facts about Maldives

**Full name:** The Republic of Maldives

**Governance:** Sultanate, beginning in the 12th century; British protectorate from 1887 to 1965; Republic since 1968; Malé is the capital

**Location and geographical features:** Twelve hundred coral islands grouped in two chains of 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean, south-southwest of India; Two hundred inhabited islands and eighty islands with tourist resorts; The lowest country in the world, with its highest point just 2.4 meters (approximately eight feet) above sea level; 644 km of coastline

**People:** Population (2012) – Three hundred and ninety-five thousand; Languages – Dhivehi (the official language, a dialect of Sinhala) and English; Religion – Sunni Islam

**Economy:** Two largest industries are tourism and fishing

## Political update:

On February 7, 2012, Nasheed was forced to resign the presidency under the threat of violence in a coup d'état perpetrated by an alliance between security forces loyal to former dictator Gayoom and minority Islamist activists. Dr. Mohamed Waheed, vice president of Maldives, having been sworn into office on November 11, 2008, after the first free, multiparty election in the country, assumed the presidency. Many, including Nasheed himself, have accused Waheed of having an active role in the conspiracy that overthrew the Nasheed administration, an accusation given credence by the fact that Waheed has appointed numerous individuals to his cabinet who were in power under Gayoom.

## Climate Change and Global Warming

*Global warming* generally refers to the ongoing rise in global average temperature near Earth's surface, a phenomenon caused mostly by increasing concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere. Global warming, in turn, causes climate patterns to change.

*Climate change* refers to any significant change in the measures of climate, such as temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, lasting for an extended period of time.

Over the course of its history, Earth's climate has undergone numerous changes, with repeated cycles of glacial advance and retreat. Most of these changes were due to small variations in Earth's orbit, which affected the amount of solar energy reaching our planet. Current warming trends have raised concerns because they are happening at an unprecedented rate.

## Rising temperatures and the greenhouse effect.

Global temperature records show that Earth has warmed since 1880, the year scientists began keeping such records. Over the past century the average temperature of

Earth has risen by 1.4°F, and is projected to rise another 2 to 11.5°F over the next hundred years. Even a small increase in temperature can upset the *greenhouse effect*, a natural phenomenon that is necessary to support life on Earth. Under normal conditions, GHGs such as water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide trap some of the sun's energy in the atmosphere and keep temperatures on Earth within a range that can sustain life. But during the past hundred years, human activity has added GHGs to the atmosphere at a rapid rate, trapping more solar energy than Earth can reflect back into space and thus causing Earth's surface temperature to rise.

# Background Information

## What happens when Earth warms up?

**Rising ocean temperatures.** Warmer oceans fuel more storms such as hurricanes and typhoons, increasing their frequency and severity. In addition, as ocean water warms, it expands and sea levels rise.

**Acidification.** Surface ocean waters become more acidic as they absorb increased carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere.

**Melting of glaciers and sea ice.** As glaciers melt, sea levels rise, posing a risk to coastal areas and low-lying islands. Melting of Arctic ice also adds to rising sea levels. The decrease in surface ice reduces the amount of solar energy reflected back into space, leading to further warming.

**Increases in evaporation and precipitation.** Some regions experience heavier rainfall and flooding, while shifting weather patterns bring drought conditions to some areas.

**Consequences for plants, animals, and people.** Changes in temperature and precipitation affect growing seasons as well as the types of plants that can be grown in a region. Increasing temperature and acidification affect the ocean's ability to be a food source. These changes move up the food chain, with consequences for both animal and human populations. Factors such as rising sea levels and drought can result in climate refugees, as people seek more-livable areas. Even gradual changes in climate conditions will require economic, political, and social adjustments throughout the world.

### Source

- » [www.epa.gov/climatechange](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange)
- » [climate.nasa.gov/evidence](http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence)
- » [www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cmb-faq/globalwarming.html](http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cmb-faq/globalwarming.html)

## Climate Change Facts

For six hundred and fifty thousand years prior to the 20th century, the highest concentration of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> was below 300 parts per million (ppm); then, in 1950, the concentration suddenly shot upward. As of November 2012, the concentration was measured at 395.01 ppm.

Greenland lost 36 to 60 cubic miles of ice per year between 2002 and 2006, while Antarctica lost about 36 cubic miles of ice in a similar period.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30%, due to increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the atmosphere and hence more being absorbed into the oceans.

The average Arctic ice cover decreased by nearly half between 1984 and 2012, from 2.59 million square miles to 1.32 million square miles, a record low.

In 2008, an estimated 20 million people were at least temporarily displaced by climate-related natural disasters. Some, like the residents of the Carteret Islands in Papua New Guinea, have begun to evacuate because of rising sea levels. Others, such as the Native Alaskans of Kivalina, are making relocation plans. Before he was deposed, President Nasheed of Maldives was looking into areas in Sri Lanka and India where residents of Maldives might move when the islands become uninhabitable.

### Sources

- » [climate.nasa.gov/evidence](http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence)
- » [insideclimatenews.org/news/20091110/nations-threatened-climate-change-call-developed-world-give-15-gdp](http://insideclimatenews.org/news/20091110/nations-threatened-climate-change-call-developed-world-give-15-gdp)

# Uncertainties and Skepticism

In the decades following World War II, scientists began noticing and monitoring changes in Earth's climate. After James Hansen, head of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, raised broad awareness of the issue in his 1988 testimony to Congress, climate change became one of the controversial and contentious issues of our time. Identifying human activity as the cause—that is, the burning of fossil fuels that emit large quantities of GHGs—has stirred debate and denial in certain quarters and doubt on the part of the public. Controlling or reversing climate change would require major reductions in GHG emissions, which in turn would have major financial implications for business and industry. To protect its interests, the fossil-fuel industry has waged a public-relations campaign designed to cast doubt on the scientific evidence of climate change. Tactics have included engaging a cadre of sympathetic scientists to use the media to publicly refute climatologists' findings; funding conservative think tanks to help spread messages casting doubt on the reality of climate change; and enlisting the help of government officials and politicians to support the industry's cause.

The effectiveness of this campaign can be seen in the following numbers:

- Ninety-seven percent of climate scientists think human activity is a significant factor in global warming.
- Three percent do not think global warming is significantly due to human activity.

## **BUT**

- Twenty-eight percent of media coverage depicts the significance of human activity to global warming.
- Seventy-two percent of coverage includes a skeptic viewpoint or denies manmade global warming.
- Twenty-six percent of the public believe global warming is happening and that humans are causing it.
- Seventy-four percent are not convinced or deny that humans are responsible.

While there is near-unanimity among scientists that climate change is occurring, a number of factors that affect Earth's climate present uncertainties requiring continued monitoring and study:

*Solar energy.* Observations of solar output only go back to the 1970s, so more study is needed to understand longer-term changes.

*Clouds.* These have powerful effects on climate, but models do not represent cloud physics well, requiring more research.

*The carbon cycle.* Each year, natural processes remove about half of the human CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the atmosphere, but where it goes is not well understood. Some evidence shows most CO<sub>2</sub> being absorbed by the ocean, and some evidence shows most being absorbed by plants. And some evidence shows that Earth's ability to absorb it may decline as the world warms.

*Other areas in need of further study:* Ocean circulation, which has a strong effect on regional climates; precipitation patterns in different regions; and sea-level rise caused by melting ice sheets.

## **Sources:**

- » [climate.nasa.gov/uncertainties](https://climate.nasa.gov/uncertainties)
- » [www.globalissues.org/issue/178/climate-change-and-global-warming](http://www.globalissues.org/issue/178/climate-change-and-global-warming)



# U.S. Climate Change Policy

U.S. policy is based on three considerations, referred to as the “Three Cs”: Cost, Competitiveness, and Comprehensiveness.

Cost refers to a monetary estimate of a GHG-reduction program, usually expressed as a gross dollar amount or as a percentage reduction in gross domestic product for some period of time. *Competitiveness* reflects concerns about which companies would be disadvantaged by cost increases as a result of GHG-reduction requirements. *Comprehensiveness* concerns the extent to which all nations have to meet comparable GHG-reduction requirements.

These policy assumptions changed between the ratification of the 1992 UNFCCC agreement in Rio de Janeiro (see sidebar) and the first decade of this century.

- The result of the mandatory CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction requirements of the Kyoto Protocol (1997) was that more attention was focused on control costs—previously thought to be minimal—which encompass a complicated set of changes in economic relationships involving producers, consumers, and government entities.
- Competitiveness issues shifted from a focus on Japan and EU countries to the rapidly growing economies of the developing world, particularly India and China.
- Developing nations, previously not major emitters of CO<sub>2</sub>, have achieved rapid economic development and now include 9 of the 20 largest GHG-emitting countries (one of these is China, which surpassed the United States in 2005 to become the world's largest emitter); these countries now need to be included in a comprehensive approach to climate change.

Adapted from [www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL30024.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL30024.pdf)

## International Agreements: Three Major Events

### Rio de Janeiro

Countries of the world began meeting to address climate change in June 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, informally known as the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro. At that meeting, the 255 governments in attendance negotiated the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the purpose of which is to stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent manmade climate change. There are currently 195 signatories to the treaty.

While the treaty set no limits on GHG emissions, it did call on signatory nations to conduct national inventories of GHG emissions to establish benchmarks for future negotiations. Further, it set up Conferences of the Parties (COPs), annual meetings of parties to the convention to assess progress in dealing with climate change and to negotiate legally binding agreements. The first COP took place in Berlin in 1995; the 2012 COP was in Doha, Qatar.

### Kyoto

In 1997, COP 3, otherwise known as the Kyoto Protocol, established binding obligations on industrialized countries to reduce GHGs. As of September 2011, 191 countries signed and ratified the protocol. The United States signed but did not ratify, and in 2001 withdrew from the treaty, citing the fact that it exempted other major GHG emitters from compliance and would harm the U.S. economy.

### Copenhagen

The goal of the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 15) was to develop a framework for extending the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012, when it was set to expire. Known as the Copenhagen Summit, the conference brought 115 world leaders together, including President Obama and China's Premier Wen Jiabao. The meeting, which showed signs of collapsing without accomplishing its goals, resulted in a last-minute agreement—the Copenhagen Accord—drafted by the United States, China, Brazil, India, and South Africa. It endorses the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and recognizes that the increase in global temperature should be below 2°C (3.6°F) to limit climate change. But the document is not legally binding and does not commit countries to specific targets of GHG reduction.

### Sources

- » [unfccc.int/2860.php](http://unfccc.int/2860.php)
- » [www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL30024.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL30024.pdf)

## Climate Change Remedies

To keep climate change in check, a number of approaches have been considered. In the film, President Nasheed talks about adopting a *carbon-neutral* policy for Maldives, that is, as a country, achieving net zero carbon emissions. With this approach, the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere is balanced by reducing an equivalent amount of carbon elsewhere. For example, an amount of CO<sub>2</sub> created by burning fossil fuels could be balanced by the use of renewable technology that creates an equal amount of energy.

Closely associated with carbon neutrality is the notion of *carbon offsets*. Reduction is the first step in being carbon neutral, but if total elimination of emissions can't be achieved, carbon offsets can balance the remainder. Offsets are a kind of trade that involves paying to support a project—such as reforestation—that reduces, or offsets, the amount of emissions that can't be reduced. Offsets have been somewhat controversial because businesses and companies often buy them, not just to balance their emissions but also to create an image of concern for the environment.

### Sources:

- » [ezinearticles.com/?Carbon-Neutral---What-Does-It-Mean?&id=339090](http://ezinearticles.com/?Carbon-Neutral---What-Does-It-Mean?&id=339090)
- » [science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/carbon-offset.htm](http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/carbon-offset.htm)

## Cap and Trade

*Cap and trade* is a market-based option to lower carbon emissions. Under cap and trade a company has a limit on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that it can emit and pays for an “emissions permit” that carries a price per ton for the CO<sub>2</sub> it releases into the atmosphere. If the amount emitted turns out to be less than the allowance bought, the unused portion of the allowance can be sold to another company. This creates a system that guarantees a set level of overall reductions while rewarding the most efficient companies, and the federal government benefits from the revenue stream from auctioning emissions permits.

Many businesses and industries are opposed to cap and trade, claiming that such a system amounts to government intervention in the economy and will drive up energy costs.

### Sources:

- » [alternativeenergy.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001391](http://alternativeenergy.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001391)
- » [www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2008/01/16/3816/cap-and-trade-101](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2008/01/16/3816/cap-and-trade-101)

## Carbon Tax

The carbon tax is another market-based option for reducing carbon emissions. It is basically a tax on pollution that levies a fee on the production, distribution, or use of fossil fuels based on how much carbon their combustion emits. Because it makes using dirty fuels more expensive, the tax makes alternative energy more competitive with fossil fuels. One objection to the tax scheme is that it would most likely be passed on to consumers. But a benefit of consumers paying the tax would be to change their behavior, encouraging them to make “cleaner” choices when it comes to energy use. A tax on carbon is generally considered a fair and efficient way to encourage conservation and reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

### Sources:

- » [www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0110/The-beauty-of-a-carbon-tax-and-its-exemption-for-the-poor](http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0110/The-beauty-of-a-carbon-tax-and-its-exemption-for-the-poor)
- » [science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/carbon-tax.htm](http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/carbon-tax.htm)

## Sequestration

*Carbon capture and sequestration* (or storage) is the process of collecting waste CO<sub>2</sub> from power plants or industrial sources, compressing it, transporting it via pipelines, and injecting it into underground geologic formations, where it can be stored for long periods, namely, thousands of years. The technology for this process already exists and has in fact been used in the United States and elsewhere for over 40 years. To encourage wide-scale deployment of this method of climate-change mitigation, comprehensive energy legislation is needed that will make sequestration cost effective.

Another form of sequestration is *terrestrial carbon sequestration*, achieved by planting trees and other plants that can take up atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. While planting and keeping forests healthy is good for the planet, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted into the atmosphere may overwhelm the capacity of trees to absorb it.

### Sources:

- » [www.epa.gov/climatechange/ccs/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ccs/index.html)
- » [www.fs.fed.us/ecosystemservices/carbon.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/ecosystemservices/carbon.shtml)

## Mitigation vs. Adaptation

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a scientific body created by the UN and the World Meteorological Organization to provide regular assessments of climate change, advocates a two-pronged approach to dealing with global warming:

*Mitigation* assumes that human activity is at least partly responsible for global warming and that people can have an impact on climate change. It relies on regulation to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and includes the remedies described above.

*Adaptation* focuses on helping people adjust to conditions of climate change. It encourages such actions as relocating populations from areas projected to become arid or flooded and learning to farm on mountains, where most precipitation is expected to fall.

There is conflict between factions supporting one or the other of these approaches. Those favoring mitigation feel that efforts to control GHG emissions must be continued, while supporters of adaptation are concerned that too much focus on mitigation will leave populations vulnerable and unprepared for inevitable climate changes.

### Sources:

» [science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/climate-skeptic.htm](http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/climate-skeptic.htm)

## Meanwhile....

... 2012 was the hottest year on record in the United States, 3.2 degrees higher than the 20th-century average.

... global carbon emissions continue to rise, increasing 54 percent between the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and January 1, 2012.

... there are nearly twelve hundred proposed coal plants around the world, three-quarters of which are planned for India and China.

### Sources:

» Juliet Eilperin, "Nation Set Record for Heat Last Year," *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2013.





## Topics and Issues Relevant to *The Island President*

A screening of *The Island President* can be used to spark interest in any of the following topics and inspire both individual and community action. In planning a screening, consider finding speakers, panelists, or discussion leaders who have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

### **The science of climate change**

#### **Environmentalism**

#### **Renewable energy**

#### **Carbon-neutral policy**

#### **Balancing the economy and the environment**

#### **Sustainability**

#### **The politics of regulation**

#### **Energy policy**

#### **Climate refugees**

#### **Solutions to climate change**

#### **Mitigation of / adapting to climate change**

## Thinking More Deeply

1. Why is it so difficult for the countries of the world to agree on climate change issues? What might make them take a strong common stand on curbing GHG emissions?
2. In climate negotiations, are appeals on moral grounds, as suggested by Mohamed Aslam in the film, an effective strategy in getting countries to “do the right thing”? Why or why not? What approaches are more persuasive in getting countries to adopt better environmental practices?
3. Do developed countries have a responsibility to help developing countries reduce their carbon footprint? How can developing countries improve their standard of living without adding to the GHGs in the atmosphere?
4. With sea levels rising, what steps do you think the states and the federal government should take to protect coastal areas from the ravages of storms such as Hurricane Sandy?
5. Can a country remain economically competitive while also working to control climate change? If so, how?
6. Do you think it's fair to tax businesses, industries, and individuals based on their carbon production and/or use? Why or why not?
7. In your own experience, what developments have you noticed that could be considered evidence of climate change?
8. Why do some people remain skeptical about climate change, even with the overwhelming evidence from meteorological studies?
9. When it comes to mitigation efforts, what changes, if any, are you willing to make or to accept in order to help reduce carbon emissions?

# Suggestions for Action

Together with other audience members, brainstorm actions that you might take as an individual and that people might do as a group. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. Get involved in fighting climate change. The group [350.org](http://www.350.org) offers a variety of projects that invite grassroots support, from hosting a screening of a climate-themed film (such as *The Island President*) to joining a divestment campaign. Visit [www.350.org](http://www.350.org) to learn about their projects, to get organizing guides on starting your own project, and to find climate activist groups in your area.
2. Ask your employer, your place of worship, or local schools and businesses to consider buying carbon offsets. Before venturing into this endeavor, read "A Consumer's Guide to Retail Carbon Offset Providers" ([www.evergreenamerica.com/index.cfm/linkservid/8283F649-1E4F-33F5-2B564DDD8B2B9A89/showMeta/0/](http://www.evergreenamerica.com/index.cfm/linkservid/8283F649-1E4F-33F5-2B564DDD8B2B9A89/showMeta/0/)) to educate yourself about the offset market and factors to keep in mind when buying offsets.
3. Calculate your carbon footprint to find out about your impact on the planet. The Cool Climate Network at the University of California, Berkeley provides a user-friendly calculator at [coolclimate.berkeley.edu/getwidget](http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/getwidget). Use the results as a guide for making reductions in that impact.
4. Educate the next generation of political and business leaders about global warming. *The Island President* curriculum asks high school students to consider the ethical obligations of business, government, and media in addressing the causes and effects of climate change. Download the curriculum at [www.itvs.org/educators](http://www.itvs.org/educators).
5. Make efforts at reducing climate change part of your everyday life. *Our Climate* ([www.ourclimate.net/guide.htm](http://www.ourclimate.net/guide.htm)) suggests over two dozen ways you can reduce GHG emissions. *Scientific American* offers additional ideas for both individuals and the larger community at [www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=10-solutions-for-climate-change](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=10-solutions-for-climate-change).

For additional outreach ideas, visit [www.communitycinema.org](http://www.communitycinema.org).

# Resources

[theislandpresident.com](http://theislandpresident.com) – The official website of the film contains background information, biographies of individuals in the film, press materials, and more.

[www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mv.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mv.html) – The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) World Factbook contains comprehensive information on various sectors of Maldivian government and society.

[www.democracymaldives.com](http://www.democracymaldives.com) – This site contains the latest news stories about Maldives.

## Global Warming and Climate Change Information

[www.exploratorium.edu/climate](http://www.exploratorium.edu/climate) – This Exploratorium site provides scientific data on climate change that encompasses many fields, including physics, chemistry, biology, geology, meteorology, oceanography, and even sociology.

[www.climatehotmap.org](http://www.climatehotmap.org) – The Union of Concerned Scientists offers a new, interactive way to learn about the local consequences of global warming. The Climate Hot Map allows you to travel the world, exploring the places (or “hot spots”) where scientists have gathered evidence for climate changes that are already underway and where they are now assessing the risks associated with further warming.

[ncadac.globalchange.gov](http://ncadac.globalchange.gov) – The National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee's (NCADAC's) Climate Assessment Report is a report that collates climate research from a wide variety of federal agencies and distills it into one major report. This latest was released on January 11, 2013.

[insideclimatenews.org/about](http://insideclimatenews.org/about) – InsideClimate News is a web-based nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization whose mission is to provide clear, objective stories that give the public and decision makers the information they need to navigate the heat and emotion of climate and energy debates.

[grist.org/series/skeptics](http://grist.org/series/skeptics) – This section of *Grist*, an online news site of environmental news and commentary, offers responses to the most common skeptical arguments on global warming.

[www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php](http://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php) – The Skeptical Science website, which explains what peer-reviewed science has to say about global warming, lists a summary of global-warming and climate-change myths, with a scientific answer for each one.

## Advocacy and Activism

[www.350.org](http://www.350.org) – The group 350.org is a global grassroots movement to solve the climate crisis. The number “350” refers to 350 ppm, the level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere that is a target for keeping climate change in check.

[www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org) – Friends of the Earth is a nonprofit environmental advocacy organization that conducts policy analysis and advocacy campaigns with a special focus on the economic drivers that are encouraging environmental degradation.

[www.c2es.org](http://www.c2es.org) – The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, the successor to the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to advance strong policy and action to address the twin challenges of energy and climate change.

[www.wri.org](http://www.wri.org) – The World Resources Institute, a global environmental think tank that goes beyond research to put ideas into action, sponsors over 50 active projects dealing with global climate change, sustainable markets, ecosystem protection, and environmentally responsible governance.

[www.amnestyusa.org/resources/educators](http://www.amnestyusa.org/resources/educators) – Amnesty International offers educational resources about human rights. For specific information about Amnesty's position on Maldives, learn more at [blog.amnestyusa.org/asia/maldives-president-and-former-prisoner-of-conscience-resigns](http://blog.amnestyusa.org/asia/maldives-president-and-former-prisoner-of-conscience-resigns).

[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org) – Human Rights Watch is one of the world's leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights through investigative research, and strategic, targeted advocacy.

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## **ITVS**

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds, presents, and promotes award-winning independently produced documentaries and dramas on public television and cable, innovative new media projects on the internet, and the Emmy Award-winning series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS receives core funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

Learn more at [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org)

Diverse Muslim Voices builds awareness and understanding in the U.S. of the range of Muslim societies and cultures. Advancing the mission of ITVS's Global Perspectives Project, a two-way exchange of independent documentaries, the multiyear project elevates stories about Muslim cultures through multiplatform promotion and distribution and ignites citizen engagement through live events and educational programs. Learn more at [www.itvs.org/series/diverse-muslim-voices](http://www.itvs.org/series/diverse-muslim-voices)

