



Climate Witness: Ben Namakin, Kiribati and Micronesia

Kiribati is a string of atoll nations straddling the Equator in the Pacific. As sea levels rise, life is increasingly harder for islanders

What the IPCC says

- Sea level rise and increased seawater temperature are projected to accelerate beach erosion, and cause degradation of natural coastal defences such as mangroves and coral reefs
- Coastal vegetated wetlands are sensitive to climate change and long-term sea-level change. Losses would be severe on most small island regions due to their low tidal range

Source: IPCC 4th Assessment Report, working group II [16.4.6 & 6.4.1.4]



Ben Namakin lives in the Federated States of Micronesia where he works as an environmental educator for the Conservation Society of Pohnpei.

“[People] had to build new homes [...], and dig up their deceased relatives from their graves and bury them further inland.”

What this WWF Climate Witness is experiencing right now

- “As the sea levels continue to rise in Kiribati, several king tides hit the island. Serious storm surges cause coastal erosion, floods grave yards, and in 2006, led to the collapse of the beautiful Dai Nippon causeway. This incident bore huge costs on the people of Kiribati. They had to build new homes with their own finance, and dig up their deceased relatives from their graves and bury them further inland.”
- “Pandanus trees mean a lot to us; they are used for house construction, local medicine, food, traditional clothing, etc., but are dying from saltwater intrusion.”
- “Saltwater intrusion affects the quality of water in wells, floods taro patches, gardens, and puts stress on plants/trees which are very important to the life and culture of an I-Kiribati.”

To limit the impacts of climate change highlighted by the IPCC's 4th Assessment Report...

- Industrialized countries must cut their emissions by at least 30% by 2020;
- Big developing economies should agree to join hands with rich countries to develop their own climate solutions; and
- Deforestation must be stopped, by making forest protection a business proposition.

WWF works with governments and communities around the world to develop region-specific adaptation strategies to address climate change impacts — such as those impacts being observed by our Climate Witnesses here and now.

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Find out more

Testimonial:

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