Island Nation May Need To Move to New Home

The Republic of Maldives (pronounced MALL-deevz) is an island country known for its warm ocean water and beautiful beaches. But if global temperatures and sea levels keep rising, the country's new president is afraid much of his nation might someday be under water. He is so worried that he is thinking about buying a piece of land -- and moving the whole country to that new location.

The Maldives, sometimes called the Maldive Islands, is made up of a group of almost 1,200 islands in the Indian Ocean. People live on 250 of those islands. Most of the islands are only about 5 feet above sea level. Over the last century, sea levels in parts of the Maldives rose by nearly 8 inches. And many experts expect a similar rise in sea levels by the end of this century. They wonder what might happen to the Maldives if sea levels keep rising at that rate or faster.

Mohamed "Anni" Nasheed, the country's president, wants to put aside some of the $1 billion the country earns every year from tourism to buy land in case people are forced to move. Nasheed has said he is looking at lands in Sri Lanka and India, because those countries have similar climates, cultures, and foods to the Maldives. He also has said he might think about Australia, which has lots of land where a new nation might be built.

NEWS WORD BOX

global   sea level   location
century   similar   tourism

MORE FACTS ABOUT THE MALDIVES

- When a huge wave called a *tsunami* hit the Maldives in 2004, 69 of the country's islands were completely flooded and another 30 half flooded.
- The country's capital is the city of Male (pronounced MAH-lee).
- The Maldives is the smallest Asian country in terms of both population and area.
- The Maldives has the lowest high (above sea level) point of any nation in the world.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

If you had to relocate from your present home, where might you plan to go? What facts would you consider when making your decision? Why would you choose that location?