



Maldivian ministers train for underwater cabinet 馬爾地夫召開海底內閣會議

Ministers in the Maldives have taken diving lessons ahead of an underwater cabinet meeting that will **highlight** the threat global warming and rising sea levels pose to the low-lying atoll nation.

President Mohamed Nasheed will chair the meeting on Oct. 17 ahead of the world climate change summit in Copenhagen in December, a spokesman told AFP from the islands' capital, Male.

He said the 14-member cabinet were taught scuba-diving basics over the weekend. Nasheed was not present as he is already a certified diver.

"The cabinet will don wet suits and scuba equipment and dive to a depth of 6m, where a special meeting of the cabinet will be convened," the spokesman, who declined to be named, said.

"They will then **ratify** a pledge calling on other nations to slash greenhouse gas emissions ahead of the Copenhagen meeting."

Cabinet members will communicate using whiteboards and hand signals.

The Maldivian archipelago, located south west of Sri Lanka, is **on the front line** of climate change and has become a vo-

cal campaigner in the battle to halt rising sea levels.

In 2007, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that a rise in sea levels of 18 to 59cm by 2100 would be enough to make the Maldives virtually **uninhabitable**.

More than 80 percent of the country's land, composed of coral islands scattered some 850km across the equator, is less than 1m above mean sea level.

The danger for the Maldives is so acute that Nasheed has raised the possibility of buying a new "homeland" in Australia, India or Sri Lanka for the nation's 330,000 citizens. (AFP)

馬爾地夫內閣閣員在海底內閣會議舉行前接受了潛水訓練：這場會議旨在凸顯全球暖化及海平面上升，對這個地勢低窪的環狀珊瑚島國所造成的威脅。

一名發言人在首都馬列對法新社表示，總統莫漢姆德·納希德十月十七日將主持這場會議，率先響應十二月在哥本哈根舉行的全球氣候變遷高峰會。

他說，十四位閣員利用週末上水肺潛水基礎課程。總統納希德已是領有合格證照的潛水員，因此不必上課。

這名不願具名的發言人表示：「閣員們將穿上潛水衣，帶著重裝潛入六公尺深的海裡，出席這場特別的會議。」

「他們將在哥本哈根高峰會前，正式通過一項呼籲各國減少溫室氣體排放量的聲明。」

屆時閣員們將利用白板和手勢溝通。

位於斯里蘭卡西南方的馬爾地夫群島帶頭力抗全球氣候變遷，不斷高分貝呼籲遏止海平面上升。

聯合國跨政府氣候變遷小組二〇〇七年時提出警告，表示二一〇〇年前全球海平面會升高十八到五十九公分，讓馬爾地夫幾乎無法住人。

由珊瑚群島組成的馬爾地夫國土綿延赤道八百五十公里，境內百分之八十以上的面積不高於海平面一公尺。

馬爾地夫的危機迫在眉睫，納希德不排除在澳洲、印度或斯里蘭卡購置新「家園」舉國遷徙，讓二十三萬人民有個安身立命之處。

(法新社/翻譯：袁星麗)

Handout pictures from the Maldivian President's Office released on Oct. 5, 2009 show the Defense Minister Ameen Faisal, above left, and some of the country's cabinet ministers, above right, with their scuba diving instructors by an islet near the capital Male.

PHOTOS: AFP/MALDIVIAN PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

馬爾地夫總統府十月五日發布的資料照片中，國防部長亞敏·斐索(左上圖)及其他內閣成員(右上圖)，和潛水教練們在首都馬列附近的一座小島上合影。

照片：法新社/馬爾地夫總統府

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **highlight** /'haɪlaɪt/ v.

凸顯 (tu2 xian3)

例：A press conference was called to highlight the threat of a flu outbreak. (政府召開記者會強調流感爆發的威脅。)

2. **ratify** /'rætaɪfaɪ/ v.

正式生效 (zheng4 shi4 sheng1 xiao4)

例：Despite discussing the proposal for hours, the legislators failed to ratify it. (儘管立委們討論了好幾個小時，該提案還是沒能正式通過。)

3. **uninhabitable** /,ʌnɪn'hæbɪtəbəl/ adj.

不適合居住的 (bu2 shi4 he2 ju1 zhu4 de5)

例：The island has been uninhabitable since the volcano erupted three weeks ago. (自從三週前火山爆發後，這座島已不適合人居。)

IDIOM POINT 重要片語

on the front line 帶頭

Somebody who is **on the front line**, is leading others to try and do something. The article says that the Maldives is **on the front line** in the fight against climate change.

Examples: "Orville has been **on the front line** of efforts to eliminate homelessness in his neighborhood for several years," or "Prof. Lee is **on the front line** of the fight against AIDS."

若說某人「**on the front line**」，就表示這個人帶頭試圖去做某事。上文中說，馬爾地夫帶頭力抗全球氣候變遷。

例如：「多年來，歐威爾一直帶頭解決鄰里間的街友問題」，或「李教授是抗愛滋病的先驅」。