

Many Strong Voices

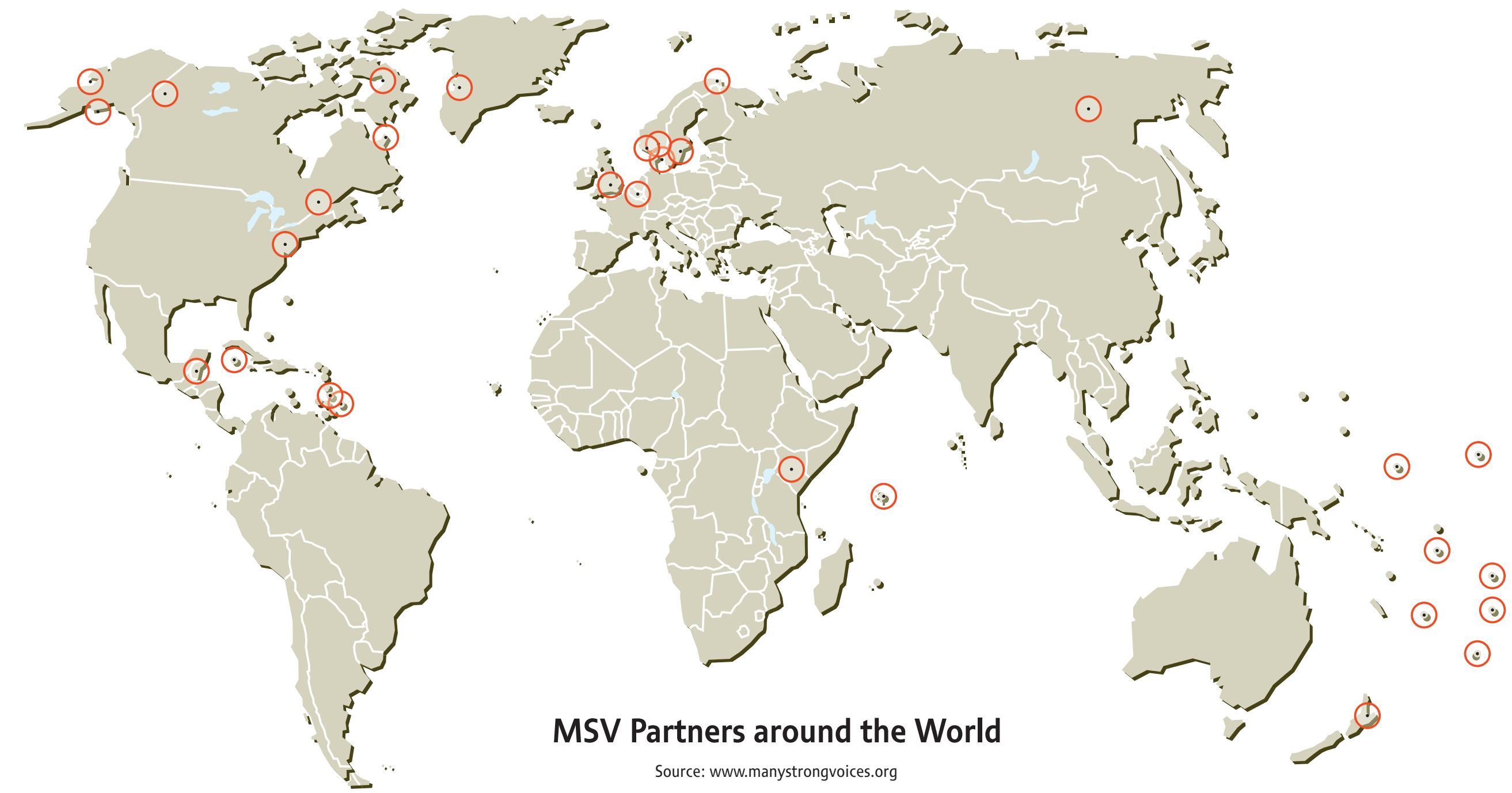
Turning Vulnerability into Strength

Many Strong Voices (MSV) promotes the well-being, security, and sustainability of coastal communities in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It brings these regions together to take action on climate change mitigation and adaptation – and to tell their stories to the world.



Climate change in the Arctic is a human issue, a family issue, a community issue, and an issue of cultural survival. The joining of circumpolar peoples with Pacific and Caribbean states is surely part of the answer in addressing these issues.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Inuit Advocate and 2007 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee.



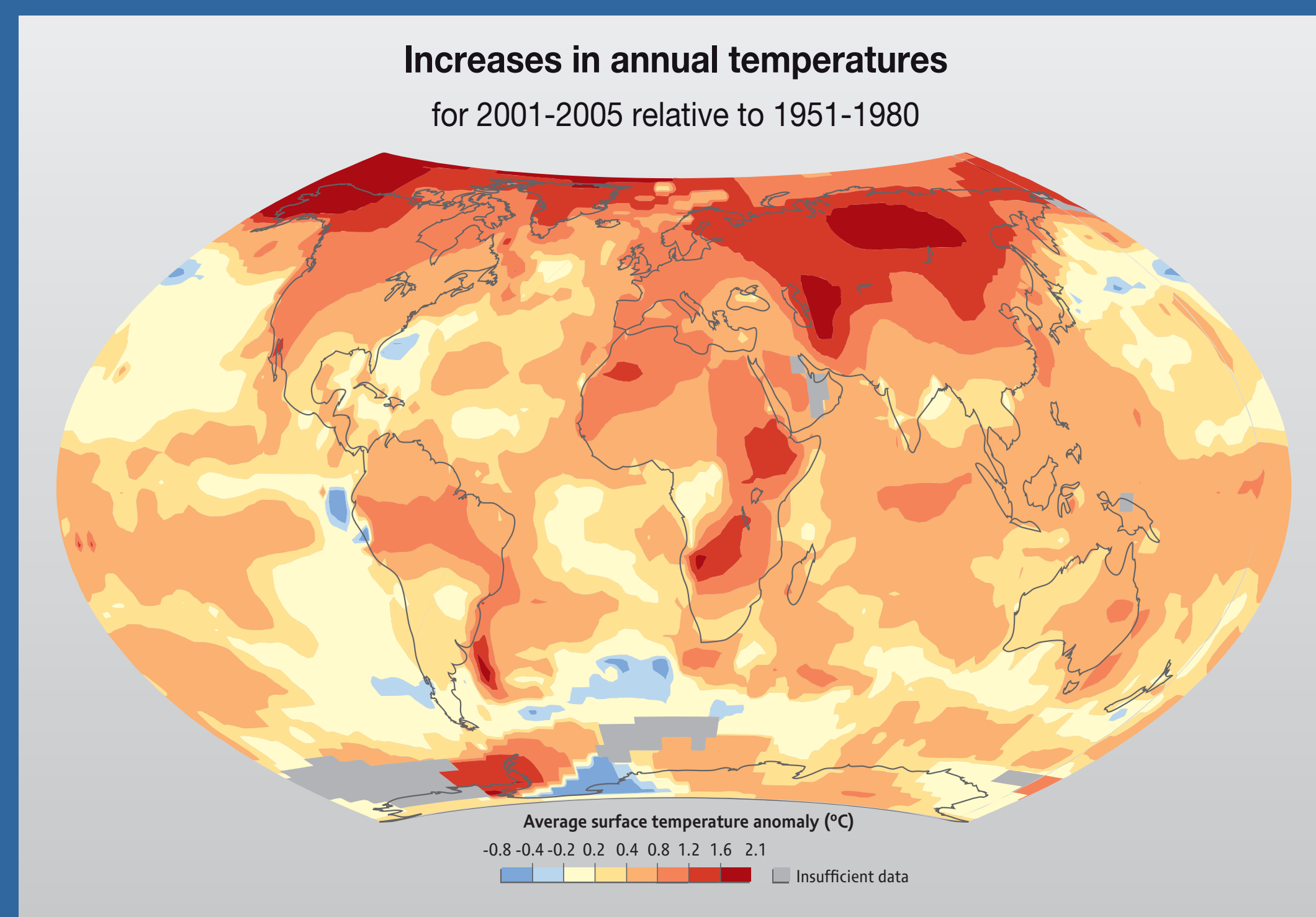
The Arctic and SIDS – different regions with similar goals

At first glance, the Arctic and Small Island Developing States appear to have little in common. Yet societies in the Arctic and SIDS share characteristics that make them vulnerable to the

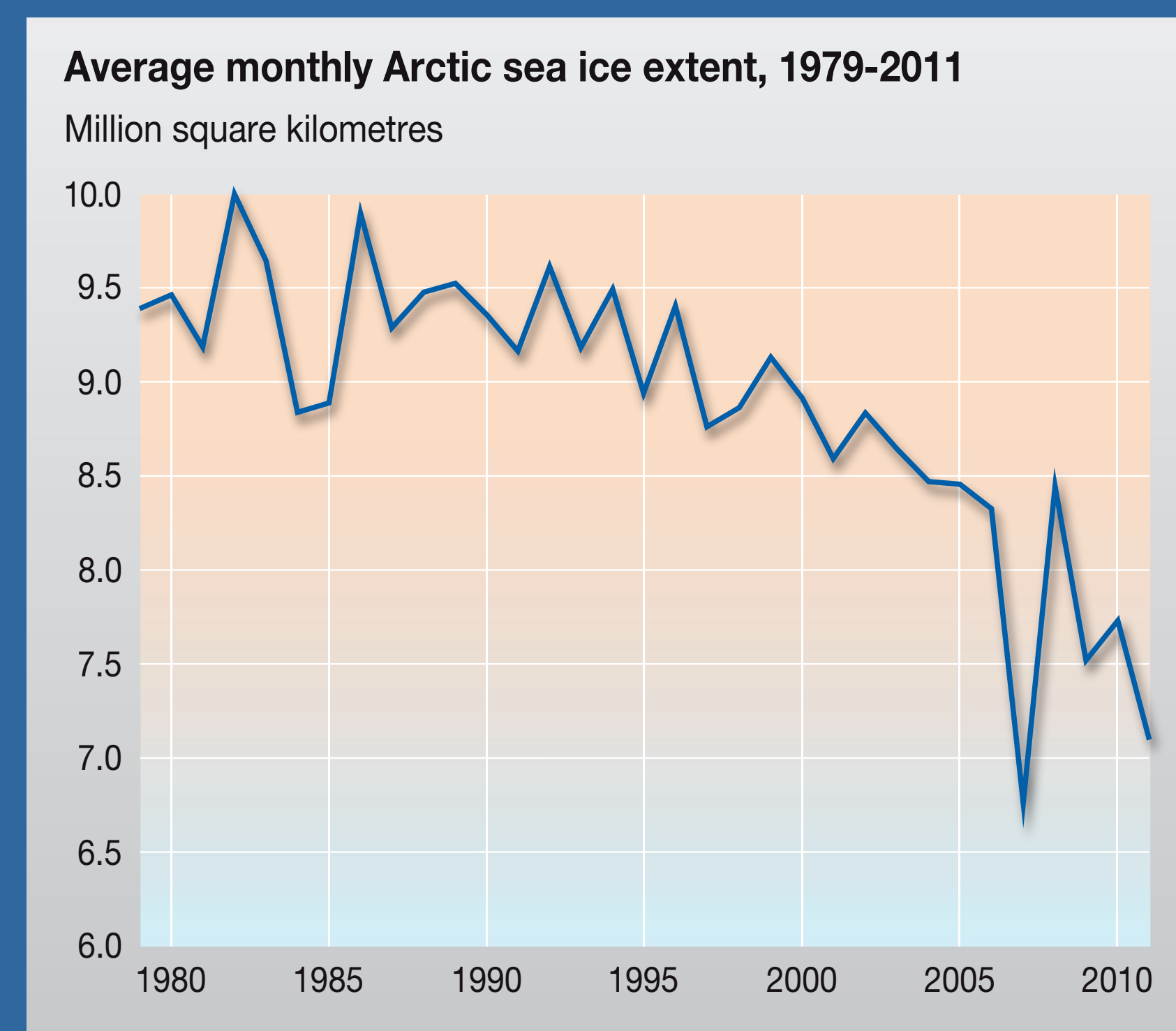
impacts of climate change, but also strengths such as a demonstrated ability to adapt to outside influences and changes over generations. Climate change effects on coastal zones

provide a common denominator between the two regions. The Arctic and SIDS were identified in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 4th Assessment Report as two of the

world's most vulnerable regions. The magnitude of present and forecasted climate change means that these regions are harbingers of what could be in store for the rest of the planet.

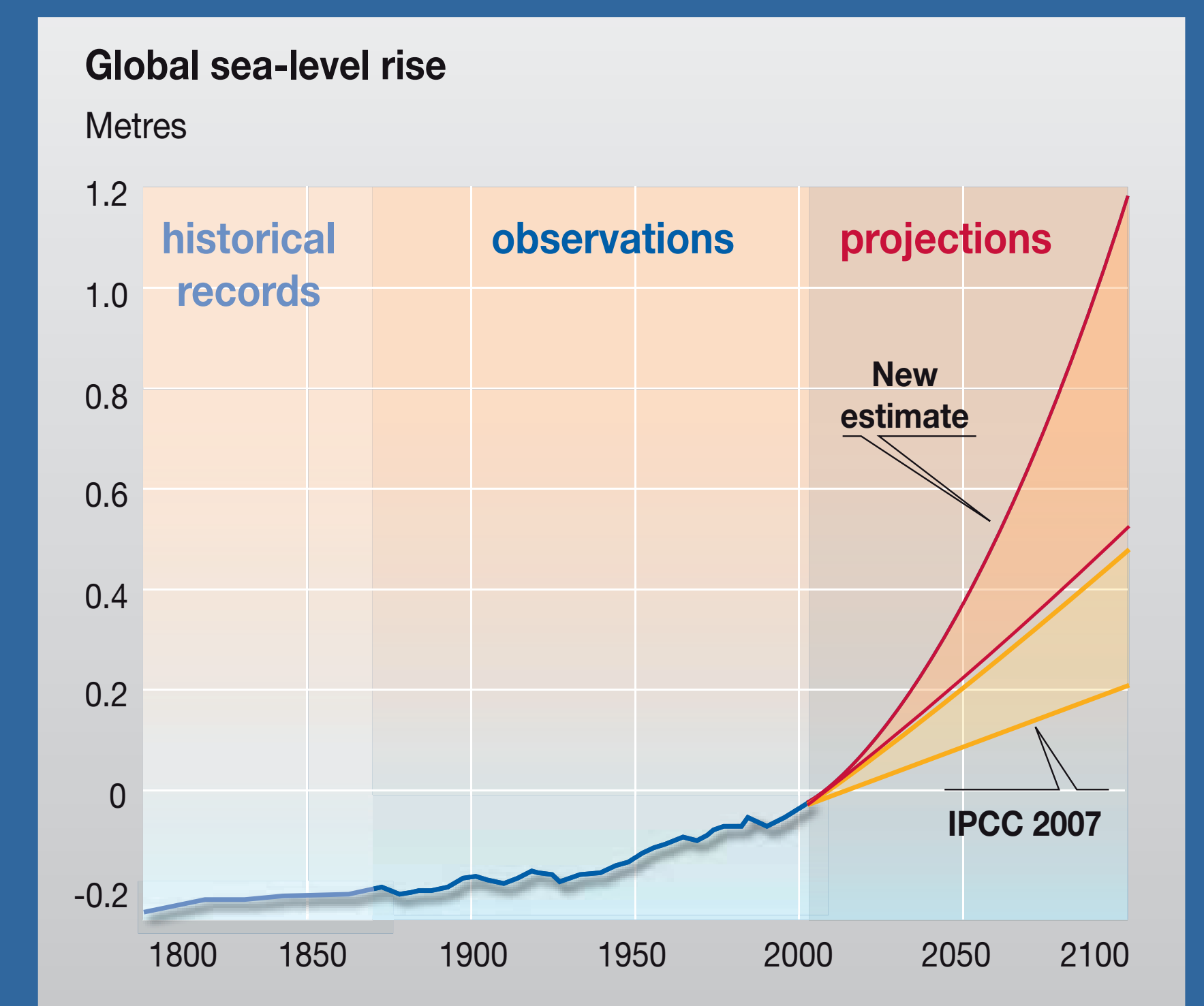


Warming is widespread, generally greater over land than over oceans, and the largest gains in temperatures for the planet are over the North American Arctic, north central Siberia, and on the Antarctic Peninsula. Source: Hansen et al., 2006



The sea ice extent for October 2011 was the second-lowest on record, after 2007.

Source: National Snow and Ice Data Centre, 2011



The IPCC projections made in the 4th Assessment Report did not take into account the rapid melting of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.

Source: Cazenave & Llovel, 2009

Many Strong Voices in Action

Many Strong Voices provides information and training, builds and supports networks and alliances, conducts original scientific research, and aids negotiations and project implementation. The work is community-driven, but links across the multiple scales of impacts, vulnerability, mitigation, and adaptation.

Influencing Decision Makers

Since 2005, Many Strong Voices has worked to strengthen the Arctic and SIDS' role in policy development processes, particularly at global climate change negotiations. It acts as a vehicle through which these regions can tell their stories and deliver strong messages on the need for action.

MSV helps to raise awareness of emerging issues, such as food security and human rights, through side events and working to insert human rights language into agreement text. MSV recently became an official observer at the IPCC.

Knowledge and Research

There is an urgent need for increased scientific and traditional understanding of on-going and future climate impacts in both the Arctic and SIDS. The MSV programme is addressing this gap by:

Working with researchers around the world to develop climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments in several of the SIDS

Developing new initiatives and projects in the Arctic and SIDS on:

- Climate change, forced relocation and human rights;
- Linking traditional and scientific knowledge for adaptation to climate change;
- Food security issues in the Arctic and SIDS.

Portraits of Resilience

MSV's Portraits of Resilience is a photography project and exhibit that works with youth and schools to document the effects of climate change in their local communities. In both the Arctic and the Small Island Developing States the goal is to let these young voices be heard and to show that the children and youth of the planet have the most at stake as the climate changes.

For more information, see www.manystrongvoices.org/portraits



I believe the lessons being learned by this unique collaboration can generate lessons and coping strategies for others who are currently not in the frontline of climate change, but may one day soon be.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, on MSV.