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Pushing the Limits: Scaling up Adaptation to Minimize Loss and Damage

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Outline

1. The challenge of Loss and Damage
2. The Limits to Adaptation
3. Five Strategies for Pushing the 'Soft' Limits to Adaptation

1. The challenge of Loss and Damage

- Climate change's impacts are already undermining socioeconomic development, and these will intensify
- The costs of climate change will be high
- Limited progress in mitigation and adaptation will result in increased losses and damage
- COP 27, UNFCCC decided to establish 'a fund' and 'new funding arrangements' for responding to 'loss and damage'.

1. The challenge of Loss and Damage

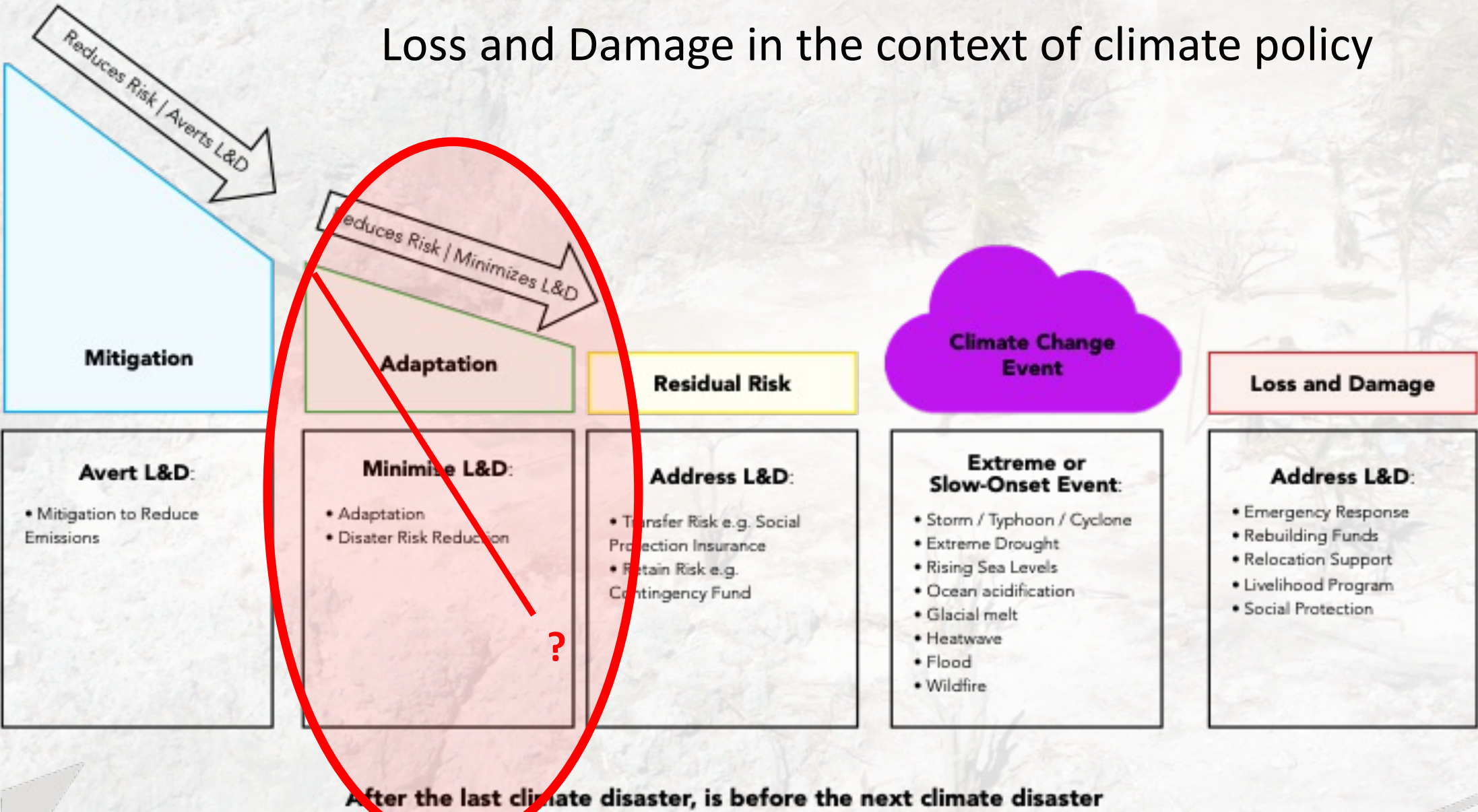
- UNFCCC distinguishes between ‘Economic’ and ‘Non-economic’ loss and damage
- ‘Economic’ = damages that are revealed in markets, and which can be replaced or restored with capital (e.g. infrastructure, businesses)
- ‘Non-economic’ = losses that are irreversible, with no effective repatriation or restoration, and for which compensation is likely incommensurate (e.g. culturally important sites and artefacts, homelands, lives)
 - A matter of values, some of which are universal, some of which arise from contextual, subjective and psycho-social phenomenon

1. The challenge of Loss and Damage

Paris Agreement Art 8. 'avert, minimize and address'

	Avert	Minimize	Address
Damage ('economic' impacts)	Mitigation and adaptation	Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction	Replace or restore (e.g. insurance, social protection)
Loss ('non-economic' impacts)	Mitigation and adaptation	Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction	????????

Loss and Damage in the context of climate policy



Source: Julie-Anne Richards 2022

2. The Limits to Adaptation

- The points at which adaptation fails to avert loss and damage are called the 'limits' to adaptation.
- Hard limits are typically those associated with physiological responses to changing climates (e.g. coral reefs, glaciers)
 - hard to avoid through anything other than mitigation of emissions
- Soft limits are those that arise from failures to implement actions that could effectively reduce vulnerability, due to cultural, economic institutional and/or political reasons.

2. The Limits to Adaptation

- Many soft limits to adaptation can be overcome, or ‘pushed’ such that losses and damages are averted or minimised, including:
 - drivers of ecosystem vulnerability (e.g. extractions, pollution, habitat fragmentation)
 - drivers of social vulnerability (e.g. lack of access to social freedoms, opportunities, and protection, and processes of exploitation and marginalisation)

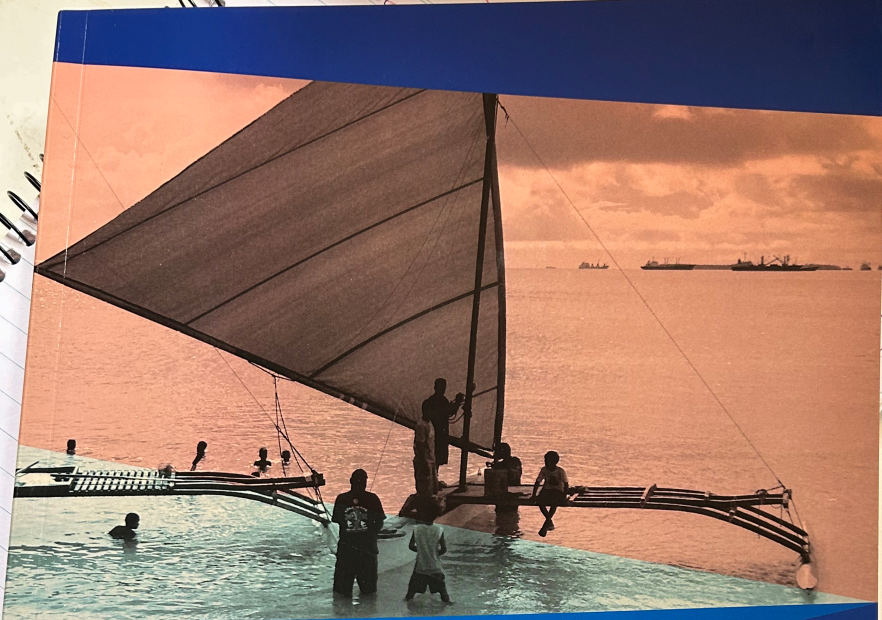
3. Five Strategies for Pushing the 'Soft' Limits to Adaptation

- Business as usual adaptation is not working to avoid loss and damage
- New and more ambitious adaptation can help push the limits of adaptation to avert and minimize loss
- Investment in institutions, people, plans and processes
- Five strategies, in combination

3. Five Strategies

1. Adopt people-centered approaches for assessing climate risk:

- to understand people's senses of intolerable losses, and their understanding of adaptation actions and their limits
- establishes benchmarks for adaptation
- helps identify actions to push limits
- empowerment and ownership, which can help 'address' loss
- requires long-term partnerships and networks involving governments and research and civil society organizations



My heritage is here
Eñin ej Jolet eo Aō

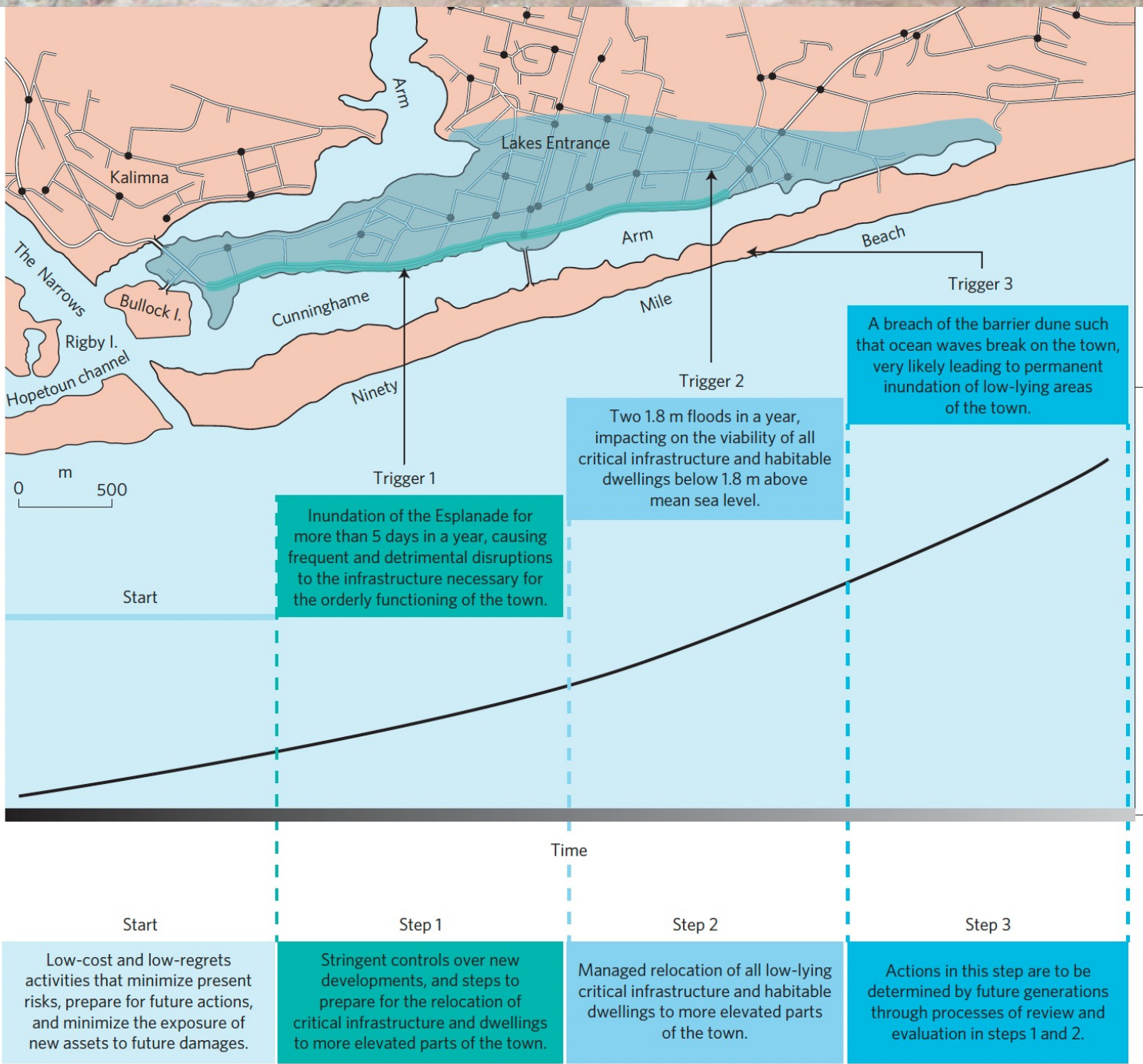
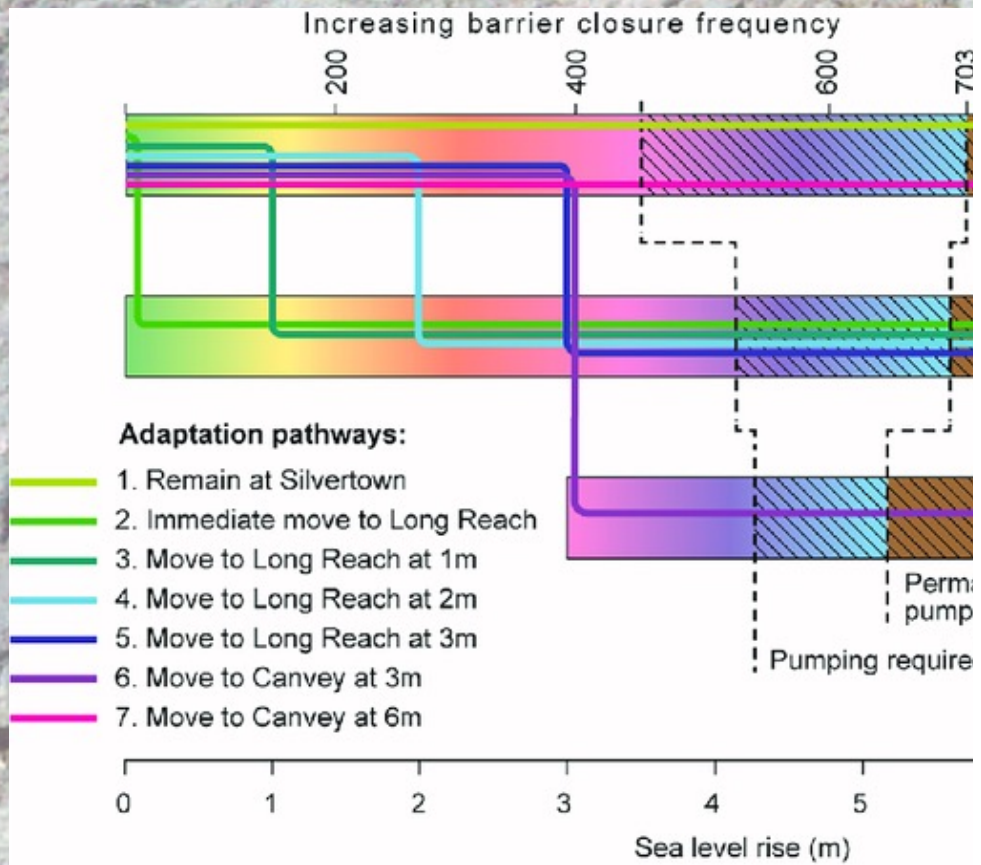
Report on Consultations with Communities
in the Marshall Islands in Support of the
Development of the National Adaptation Plan
Ripoot in mejele ko jän jukjukün päd
ko ilo Majöl me rej rejtake ejaakin
National Adaptation Plan eo



3. Five Strategies

2. Develop adaptation pathways to guide decision-making and investments

- co-produce sequenced processes of actions to avoid loss
- identify thresholds of change and socialize responses in advance
- empowerment and ownership of adaptation process and its outcomes
- requires long-term commitments from all parties including donors
- trust funds?



3. Five Strategies

3. Increase investments in ecosystem- and nature-based solutions

- many losses are tied to ecological processes, esp. for people whose livelihoods and cultures are resource-dependent
- limits can be pushed by tackling non-climate drivers of ecosystem (dis)function (EBA)
- role for R&D and innovation, e.g. NBS for small islands



3. Five Strategies

4. Renewed focus on investments in human and social development and governance

- Vulnerability = a lack of choices ('trapped')
- A wide range of processes can increase people's choices:
 - Social protection, connectivity, social opportunities, rights protection, labor mobility, microfinance....
- Integration of adaptation and social sector strategies, esp. for most vulnerable peoples

3. Five Strategies

5. Systematize monitoring and evaluation

- Knowledge is a key barrier to adaptation
- Systematic monitoring of trends in risk factors
- Stocktake of past adaptation actions, and evaluation of adaptation impact to learn about best practices and enablers
- Requires investments in partnerships for monitoring, independent evaluation capacity in countries, and knowledge exchange

Conclusions

Loss and damage arises when mitigation and adaptation fail

The parameters of mitigation effectiveness are known, but the parameters of adaptation effectiveness are not

A step change in adaptation is required to avoid loss, and can be achieved through long-term partnerships with national organizations that have local reach, and supporting them to identify adaptation goals, develop and implement adaptation pathways, invest in ecosystem- and nature-based strategies, invest in human capital, and monitor and evaluate progress.