

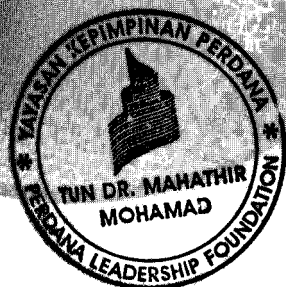
**MICHAEL
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INTRODUCTION

In late 2003, at the Sustainable Earth Summit conference in Johannesburg, the Pacific island nation of Vanutu announced that it was preparing a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States over global warming. Vanutu stood only a few feet above sea level, and the island's eight thousand inhabitants were in danger of having to evacuate their country because of rising sea levels caused by global warming. The United States, the largest economy in the world, was also the largest emitter of carbon dioxide and therefore the largest contributor to global warming.

The National Environmental Resource Fund, an American activist group, announced that it would join forces with Vanutu in the lawsuit, which was expected to be filed in the summer of 2004. It was rumored that wealthy philanthropist George Morton, who frequently backed environmental causes, would personally finance the suit, expected to cost more than \$8 million. Since the suit would ultimately be heard by the sympathetic Ninth Circuit in San Francisco, the litigation was awaited with some anticipation.

But the lawsuit was never filed.

No official explanation for the failure to file has ever been given either by Vanutu or NERF. Even after the sudden disappearance of George Morton, an inexplicable lack of interest by the media has left the

circumstances surrounding this lawsuit unexamined. Not until the end of 2004 did several former NERF board members begin to speak publicly about what had happened within that organization. Further revelations by Morton's staff, as well as by former members of the Los Angeles law firm of Hassle and Black, have added further detail to the story.

Thus it is now clear what happened to the progress of the Vanutu litigation between May and October of 2004, and why so many people died in remote parts of the world as a result.

MC

Los Angeles, 2004