

## Climate report spurs immediate calls for drastic, speedy change

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PARIS

The bleak outlook of a major new report on climate change shifted the onus onto governments, even mankind, to stop prevaricating and truly act, with dire warnings Friday from around the world that drastic, rapid change is needed — not least from the United States.

**IPCC Report Summary available here: <http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM2feb07.pdf>**

"We are on the historic threshold of the irreversible," warned French President Jacques Chirac, who called for an economic and political "revolution" to save the planet.

"While climate changes run like a rabbit, world politics move like a snail: either we accelerate or we risk a disaster," said Italy's environment minister, Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio.

Campaigners and governments pressed industrial nations, some specifically naming the United States, to significantly cut greenhouse-gas emissions. Others said the threat was not simply to the environment, but to international peace, prosperity and development.

There were calls for urgent talks to hammer out a new worldwide agreement to stop global warming. The Italian minister called for a global tax on carbon emissions and a "strong" United Nations organization for the environment.

South Africa's Environmental Affairs Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said failure to act would be "indefensible." His Indonesian counterpart said "drastic steps" were needed to slow rising temperatures.

"We are now beyond a critical turning point in the debate: those who continue to ignore the threat and its causes, or invoke half-baked arguments to confuse and obstruct, will be doing the greatest disservice imaginable to current and future generations," van Schalkwyk said.

The long-awaited report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said global warming is "unequivocal," "very likely" man-made and will "continue for centuries" — findings bleaker than its last report in 2001.

"If the last IPCC report was a wake-up call, this one is a screaming siren," said Stephanie Tunmore, of Greenpeace.

"The good news is our understanding of the climate system and our impact on it has improved immensely. The bad news is that the more we know, the more precarious the future looks," Tunmore said. "There's a clear message to governments here, and the window for action is narrowing fast."

There was no immediate government reaction from China, which is expected to surpass the United States as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the next decade. The release of the report in Paris came late in the afternoon for Beijing.

In India, another country of 1 billion-plus people that faces the same challenge of how to develop economically without ruining its environment, a senior ecology official noted that the climate change panel is "a network of scientists" that cannot set policy.

"This is a group of climate experts attempting to reach a scientific consensus. It doesn't commit governments to any course of action," said the official, Pradipto Ghosh, of India's Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The Indonesian environment minister, Rachmat Witoelar, has predicted that some 2,000 of Indonesia's estimated 18,000 islands would be swallowed by the sea within three decades because of man-made climate change.

"Developing countries must make binding commitments to cut emissions by 40 to 60 percent. And we in Indonesia must guard against the burning of our forests and better monitor our industries," he said in the capital, Jakarta, where days of torrential rain caused rivers to break their banks Friday, submerging streets in muddy water and inundating homes and businesses.

"We want to see our grandchildren enjoy the earth too, don't we?"

The report's conclusion that human-caused warming and sea-level rise will "continue for centuries" — regardless of whether greenhouse gas-emissions are stabilized — was sobering for future generations.

"The ones who come after us, they are the ones who are going to suffer," said David Guervos, a Madrid officer worker.

"I am worried for him more than anything," said Maite Leon, gesturing toward her 6-month-old bundled against the cold Madrid morning in a stroller. "By myself I cannot do anything, but if we each do our little bit, maybe we can change things. We have to do it all together."

Campaigners said emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases must be reined in. Friends of the Earth said industrialized nations "must lead the way" and help less-developed countries develop sustainable, low-carbon economies. The European Union's environment commissioner, Stavros Dimas, said that by 2020, developing nations should cut their emissions to two-thirds of the level they were in 1990.

The South African minister said the report "is a wake-up call to the world's largest emitter, the United States."

"There are no more doubts on humanity's responsibilities and the conclusion is clear: man is the cause, and man is the solution," said Roberto Della Seta, president of Legambiente, Italy's main environmental group. "Only urgent, immediate government action on a vast scale can avert catastrophic consequences."

Scientists hailed the report as a landmark. It makes clear that sea levels will rise inexorably over coming centuries. "It is a question of when and how much, and not if," World Meteorological Organization Secretary General Michel Jarraud said.

"If the sea level rises permanently it will submerge the whole country forever," said Ahmed Saeed, foreign minister for the Maldives, an archipelago of 1,190 low-lying coral islands off southern India.

Failure to act "will one day in the history books be considered irresponsible," U.N. Environment Program executive director Achim Steiner said.

"This new report should spur policymakers to get off the fence and put strong and effective policies in place to tackle greenhouse gas emissions," he said. "The implications of global warming over the coming decades for our industrial economy, water supplies, agriculture, biological diversity and even geopolitics are massive."

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AP writers from around the world contributed to this report.