

British government warns of climate change

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The British government has issued a report warning of the effects of global warming, saying there's only a small chance of avoiding serious affects.

The report estimates seal levels could rise by 23 feet as a result of global warming caused by increasing levels of greenhouse gases, the BBC reported Monday. The report says the world's poorest nations will be most vulnerable.

Entitled "Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change," the report summarizes evidence presented by scientists during a conference put on by Britain's Meteorological Office last February.

Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett said the report's conclusions would be a shock to many people. "The thing that is perhaps not so familiar to members of the public ... is this notion that we could come to a tipping point where change could be irreversible," she told the BBC.

"We're not talking about it happening over five minutes, of course, maybe over a thousand years, but it's the irreversibility that I think brings it home to people."

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