

Peatlands disappearance of concern

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A report released Friday at a U.N. conference in Kenya indicates clearing peat lands threatens the world's ability to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The report released at the U.N. Climate Change Conference, meeting until Nov. 17 in Nairobi, finds deforestation, frequent fires, draining for agriculture use and timber are among the reasons valuable peat lands are disappearing, and countries are doing little to limit the damage.

Marcel Silvius of Wetland International said peat fires produce heavy smoke and take long to extinguish, contributing to carbon dioxide emissions.

"No more peat land should be cleared and projects to reclaim the lost lands should be started in the already lost areas," Silvius said.

Peat lands are made up of densely packed, partly decayed plant matter thousands of years old and while they occupy a mere 3-5 percent of the Earth's surface, can absorb 25-30 percent of the world's carbon dioxide.

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