

Ban: Warm Antarctica temps show eco-issues

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U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said warmer temperatures in Antarctica highlight the dangers of climate change and the need to address them.

Ban, the first United Nations secretary-general to visit the southern polar continent, said in a news release Sunday the landscape on Antarctica is "rare and wonderful" but also deeply disturbing as the ice melts at a fast pace.

Ban has made climate change a priority issue and is seeking international commitments to counter it as an international conference in Bali next month draws closer.

"It is here where our work, together, comes into focus," Ban said in a statement issued from New York. "We see Antarctica's beauty -- and the danger global warming represents, and the urgency that we do something about it."

To bolster his point, Ban said glaciers on King George Island have shrunk by 10 percent, recalled the collapse and disappearance of the "Larsen B ice sheet" several years ago, and warned that the Western Antarctic Ice Shelf is at risk.

"It is all floating ice, one fifth of the entire continent. If it broke up, sea levels could rise by ... 18 feet," he said.

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