

Netherlands adds to UN climate report controversy

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A picture released by the Projectbureau Delfandse Kust shows a general view of the beach in Monster, south of the Hague in the Netherlands, taken in November 2009. The Netherlands has asked the UN climate change panel to explain an inaccurate claim in a landmark 2007 report that more than half the country was below sea level, the Dutch government said Friday.

The Netherlands has asked the UN climate change panel to explain an inaccurate claim in a landmark 2007 report that more than half the country was below sea level, the Dutch government said Friday.

According to the Dutch authorities, only 26 percent of the country is below [sea level](#), and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will be asked to account for its figures, environment ministry spokesman Trimo Vallaart told AFP.

The incident could cause further embarrassment for the IPCC, which recently admitted a claim in the same report that [global warming](#) could melt [Himalayan glaciers](#) by 2035 was wrong.

IPCC experts calculated that 55 percent of the Netherlands was below sea level by adding the area below sea level -- 26 percent -- to the area threatened by river flooding -- 29 percent -- Vallaart said.

"They should have been clearer," Vallaart said, adding that the Dutch office for environmental planning, an IPCC partner, had exact figures.

Correcting the error had been "on the agenda several times" but had never actually happened, Vallaart said.

The spokesman said he regretted the fact that proper procedure was not followed and said it should not be left to politicians to check the IPCC's numbers.

The Dutch environment ministry will order a review of the report to see if it contains any more errors, Vallaart said.

The IPCC's 938-page Fourth Assessment Report spurred politicians around the world to vow action with its warning that [climate change](#) was on the march, but the body has faced fierce criticism over the glacier mistake.

Glaciologists have discredited the Himalaya claim, which is being withdrawn, and the controversy has given fresh ammunition to climate sceptics.

No evidence could be found to show the claim had been published in a peer-reviewed journal and reports in Britain have said the reference came from green group the WWF, who in turn sourced it to the New

Scientist magazine.

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