

Climate scientists told to 'stop speaking in code'

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In this July 19, 2007 file photo an iceberg is seen off Ammassalik Island in Eastern Greenland. A new assessment of climate change in the Arctic shows the ice in the region is melting faster than previously thought and sharply raises projections of global sea level rise this century. (AP Photo/John McConnico, File)

(AP) -- Scientists at a major conference on Arctic warming were told Wednesday to use plain language to explain the dramatic melt in the region to a world reluctant to take action against climate change.

An authoritative report released at the meeting of nearly 400 scientists in Copenhagen showed [melting ice](#) in the Arctic could help raise [global sea levels](#) by as much as 5 feet this century, much higher than earlier projections.

James White, of the University of Colorado at Boulder, told fellow researchers to use simple words and focus on the big picture when describing their research to a wider audience. Focusing too much on details could blur the basic science, he said: "If you put more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, it will get warmer."

Prominent U.S. climate scientist Robert Corell said researchers must try to reach out to all parts of society to spread awareness of the global implications of the Arctic melt.

"Stop speaking in code. Rather than 'anthropogenic,' you could say 'human caused,'" Corell said.

The Arctic has been warming twice as fast as the global average in recent decades, and the latest five-year period is the warmest since measurements began in the 19th century, according to the report by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program - a scientific body set up by the eight Arctic rim countries.

The report emphasized "the need for greater urgency" in combating global warming. But nations remain bogged down in their two-decade-long talks on reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other [greenhouse gases](#) blamed for global warming.

The World Bank's special envoy for [climate change](#), Andrew Steer, said the new findings "are a cause for great concern." The sea rise will affect millions in both rich and poor countries, but would particularly affect the poor, he said, because "they tend to live in the lowest lying land and have the fewest resources to adapt."

Steer said bank studies showed the costs of major flooding events on infrastructure and the economy could run into billions of dollars.

"It is clear that we are not on track in the battle against climate change," he said.

Bogi Hansen, an expert on ocean currents from the Faeroe Islands, said one problem is that scientists can come off as unsure about conclusions because they are reluctant to talk about anything with 100 percent certainty.

White, the Colorado scientist, agreed. At a news conference later Wednesday, he said those opposed to reining in fossil fuels "sow the seeds of doubt that give the people the impression that ... unless every single one of us lines up behind an idea, that decisions can't be taken."

The AMAP report will be delivered to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the foreign ministers of Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Russia, at an [Arctic](#) Council meeting in Greenland next week.

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