

Dutch agency: Netherlands could face higher sea level rises

October 25 2021, by Mike Corder



In the July 17, 2021 file photo, father and son walk through their flooded street, in the town of Brommelen, Netherlands. Dutch climate experts warned Monday, Oct. 25, 2021 that the low-lying Netherlands could face higher sea level rises than previously forecast as well as the threat of extreme rainfall and other dangerous weather events caused by climate change. Credit: AP Photo/Bram Janssen

Dutch climate experts warned Monday that the low-lying Netherlands could face higher sea level rises than previously forecast as well as the threat of extreme rainfall and other dangerous weather events caused by climate change.

The Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, known by its Dutch acronym KNMI, issued the stark warning in a new update based on its own research and a report issued in August by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The Dutch report was presented less than a week before the U.N.'s annual climate conference opens in Glasgow, Scotland. The Oct. 31-Nov. 12 event, known as COP26, is seen by many as an important and even crucial opportunity for concrete government commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"It might not be cheerful reading, but it is necessary reading," Dutch State Secretary for Infrastructure and Water Steven Weyenberg said.

"Talking about [climate change](#) as something we do for our children underestimates the urgency," he added.

The KNMI said that if [greenhouse gas emissions](#) are not reduced, the [sea level](#) along the long Dutch coastline could rise by 1.2 meters (nearly 4 feet) by the year 2100. The institute warned in 2014 of a possible 1-meter rise.

It said in Monday's update that if melting of the Antarctic ice cap accelerates, then sea levels could rise by 2 meters by 2100.



In the July 17, 2021 file photo, Wiel de Bie, 75, stands outside his flooded home in the town of Brommelen, Netherlands. Dutch climate experts warned Monday, Oct. 25, 2021 that the low-lying Netherlands could face higher sea level rises than previously forecast as well as the threat of extreme rainfall and other dangerous weather events caused by climate change. Credit: AP Photo/Bram Janssen

The agency also warned of both heavier summer storms and droughts, with river levels expected to be lower in the summer and higher in the winter.

The low-lying Netherlands is protected by thousands of kilometers (miles) of dikes along its rivers and its North Sea coast, and has a national Delta Fund that invests hundreds of millions each year in

improvements and maintenance.

Over the summer, torrential rainfall sparked widespread flooding in the southern province of Limburg. The same heavy summer storm caused dozens of deaths in neighboring Germany and Belgium.

"Adapting to [extreme weather](#) and anticipating sea level rises must be a top priority for a new government," Rogier van der Sande, chairman of the Dutch Union of Water Boards, said in a statement Monday.

Four parties are currently negotiating to form the next Dutch ruling coalition, with climate measures one of the topics they are discussing.

Weyenberg said it is clear more has to be done.

"The climate crisis is here. It's code red, and it is up to us all to act," he said.

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