

Rising sea levels unavoidable, say scientists

By Nina Chestney, Reuters

Rising sea levels cannot be stopped over the next several hundred years, even if deep emissions cuts lower global average temperatures, but they can be slowed down, climate scientists said in a study on Sunday.



A lot of climate research shows that rising greenhouse gas emissions are responsible for increasing global average surface temperatures by about 0.17 degrees Celsius a decade from 1980-2010 and for a sea level rise of about 2.3mm a year from 2005-2010 as ice caps and glaciers melt.

Rising sea levels threaten about a tenth of the world's population who live in low-lying areas and islands which are at risk of flooding, including the Caribbean, Maldives and Asia-Pacific island groups.

More than 180 countries are negotiating a new global climate pact which will come into force by 2020 and force all nations to cut emissions to limit warming to below 2 degrees Celsius this century – a level scientists say is the minimum required to avert catastrophic effects.

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