



## Nature and the Environment in the News

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### Vietnam highly vulnerable to climate change

Vietnam could be among the countries worst hit by climate change and rising sea levels, a British government expert said Monday.

"Vietnam potentially is one of the countries where sea level rises could have the most dramatic impact," said Mark Lowcock, a senior official with Britain's Department for International Development.

Lowcock said that, while many forecasters predict dire consequences for low-lying Bangladesh, Vietnam would also be badly hit, and "nearly a quarter of the population of this country could be directly affected."

Vietnam, with a population of 84 million, has over 3,200 kilometres (2,000 miles) of coastline.

It suffered 10 typhoons and severe storms last year, and concentrates much of its food production in the low-lying Mekong delta.

If sea levels rose by one metre, Vietnam would lose more than 12 percent of its land, home to 23 percent of its people, said a British government paper to accompany its recent Stern Review on climate change.

Climate change could also bring "more frequent and severe typhoons," and rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns would also affect Vietnam's agriculture and water resources, it said.

Vietnam, whose economy grew by over eight percent last year, is also emitting more pollutants, with the amount of greenhouse gases released projected to increase by a factor of 2.3 from 1994-2020, the paper said.

Nguyen Khac Hieu, a senior official with Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, agreed that Vietnam faces a serious threat.

"If the world community has no positive measures to reduce greenhouse emissions, global temperatures will increase and the sea level will rise," he said. "Vietnam, a country with long and low coastlines, will be affected."