

## Greenhouse Gas Jump Shows Kyoto Vital - UK

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By Ed Stoddard

BANGKOK (Reuters) - A worrying rise in the levels of so-called greenhouse gases linked to climate change highlights the importance of the Kyoto protocol, British Environment Minister Elliot Morley said Wednesday.

Carbon dioxide levels, the main gas blamed for blanketing the planet and pushing up temperatures since the Industrial Revolution, have risen by more than two parts per million (ppm) in the past two years against a recent rate of about 1.5 ppm.

Scientists said Monday the figures were confirmed at sites including Mauna Loa, Hawaii, west Ireland and the Norwegian Arctic island of Svalbard, about 800 miles from the North Pole. The rise was less in the southern hemisphere.

"If this trend continues, then it suggests that the impact of global warming will be faster than what had previously been modeled with all the problems that will go with it," Morley told Reuters.

"It absolutely underscores the importance of Kyoto and underscores the need for international action by all countries," he said on the sidelines of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Bangkok.

U.N. scientists project that average temperatures will rise 1.4 to 5.8 C (3 to 11 F) by 2100 because of human impact on the climate.

Temperatures have already risen by 0.8 C since the Industrial Revolution in tandem with a 30 percent rise in CO2 levels.

The U.N.'s Kyoto protocol, likely to come into force in coming months with Russian help after a U.S. pullout in 2001, obliges developed nations to cut their carbon dioxide emissions by 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-12.

Russian President Vladimir Putin backed the Kyoto Protocol unambiguously Tuesday in his first public comments since his government sent it to the Kremlin-dominated parliament for ratification.

Russian ratification is vital to the environmental pact, which needs the backing of nations responsible for 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

"It's a huge boost to the Kyoto process," Morley said of Russia's support after years of dithering.

"It means that we can now look for the next stage of Kyoto, because Kyoto is the beginning and not the end of a process. We can move on."

Rising global temperatures have been linked to extreme weather patterns, including droughts and flooding, and are seen by some as a potential spark for regional conflicts.

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