

## Indonesia could lose 2,000 islands by 2030 due to global warming, environment minister says

Written by AP Monday, 29 January 2007 JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) \_ Rising sea levels because of global warming stand to inundate around 2,000 islands in Indonesia by 2030, the country's environment minister said Monday.

The assessment by Rachmat Witoelar was the government's bleakest yet of the effects of global warming on the Southeast Asian nation that is made up of some 18,000 islands, most of them unpopulated.

``It is very, very serious," he said at a media conference attended by Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the U.N. climate treaty secretariat.

Witoelar said respected scientific studies showed around 2,000 islands would be swallowed by 2030. He did not say whether the threatened islands were inhabited or not.

The environment minister also said rice shortages are forecast for next year because of wild weather blamed on climate change.

``It is feared there will be a lack of rice production next year because of the changes in the weather and because the farmers are not used to this," he said.

De Boer was in Jakarta to discuss a major U.N. climate change meeting later this year on the resort island of Bali. Environment ministers from 80 countries will meet to begin talks on what action the world must take after the first commitment period of the Kyoto protocol expires in 2012.

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