

Thông tin về Thiên nhiên và Bảo tồn

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Climate change threatens VN

Tens of millions of Vietnamese will be affected by global warming

HÀ NỘI — The livelihoods of tens of millions of Vietnamese are threatened by global warming, a meeting organised by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment heard yesterday.

Attending the workshop to discuss the Government's National Target Programme on Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise were representatives from the Committee on Science, Technology and Environment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), as well as ministry officials.

Environment Minister Phạm Khôi Nguyên said a draft proposal on how to minimise the effects of global warming would be submitted to the Government at the up-coming fourth session of the 12th National Assembly.

Under the proposal, cli-

mate-change adaptation and mitigation projects would be piloted in provinces most at risk of sea-level rise – Nam Định, Thừa Thiên Huế, Quảng Nam, Bà Rịa – Vũng Tàu and Bến Tre over the next two years.

From 2011-2015, the plan will be adopted nationwide.

Dr Rex Victor O Cruz, from the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change said it was vital to implement strategies to offset the effects of climate change – particularly in coastal zones, the northern and southern deltas and highland areas.

He said that agriculture needed to be diverse and sustainable. He said farmers needed to employ the latest energy-efficient technologies and infrastructure needed to be modernised.

To mitigate the effects of climate change, carbon emissions needed to be reduced and trees planted to soak up

carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, said Cruz.

Under the ministry's proposal, there should be greater use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, and hydroelectric power. There should also be greater investment in nuclear energy, the proposal states.

The ministry is also aiming to increase the proportion of forest coverage from 37 per cent in 2005 to more than 42 per cent by the end of 2010.

Sea-level rises

The environment minister quoted a report by the World Bank which said that Việt Nam would be among the five countries worst affected by global warming and sea-level rises.

It said that a one-metre rise in sea levels would leave 40,000 sq km of coastal area under water, cutting 10 per cent off the country's gross

domestic product.

"In fact, the livelihoods of tens of millions of Vietnamese people are threatened by the impacts of climate change," said Vũ Văn Triệu, the IUCN's chief representative in Việt Nam.

It is predicted that average temperatures would rise by two degrees Celsius by 2050, according to Nguyễn Đức Ngữ, former general director of the Việt Nam Meteorology and Hydrology Centre.

Average sea levels would increase by 35cm by 2050, 50cm by 2070 and one metre by 2100, said Ngữ.

He said climate change was not just about reducing carbon emissions but about sustainable development.

"The importance of climate change needs to be appreciated and [strategies adopted to offset its effects] by the whole of society," said the environment minister. — VNS