


## Tuvalu pleads for global warming action

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*Reuters/ Pacnews*  
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SEOUL, KOREA ---- The Pacific island state of Tuvalu has urged the rest of the world to do more to combat global warming before it sinks beneath the ocean.

The group of atolls and reefs, home to some 10,000 people, is barely two meters on average above sea level and one study predicted at the current rate the ocean is rising could disappear in the next 30 to 50 years.

"We keep thinking that the time will never come. The alternative is to turn ourselves into fish and live under water," Tuvalu Deputy Prime Minister Tavau Teii told Reuters in the South Korean capital where he was attending a conference on the environment.

"All countries must make an effort to reduce their emissions before it is too late for countries like Tuvalu," he said, calling the country one of the most vulnerable in the world to man-made climate change.

He reeled off a list of threats to the country, one of whose few export earnings comes from its Internet country suffix, which it can sell to anyone wanting their Website site to end with .tv.

Coral reefs are being damaged by the warming ocean and so threatening fish stocks -- the main source of protein.

The sea is increasingly invading underground fresh water supplies, creating problems for farmers, while drought constantly threatened to limit drinking water.

Annual spring tides appear to be getting higher each year, eroding the coastline. As the coral reefs die, that protection goes and the risk only increases.

And the mounting ferocity of cyclones from a warmer ocean also brought greater risks, he said, noting another island state in the area had been buffeted by waves three years ago that crashed over its 30 meter cliffs

"We'll try and maintain our own way of living on the island as long as we can. If the time comes we should leave the islands, there is no other choice but to leave," said Mr Teii.

Mr Teii said his government had received indications from New Zealand it was prepared to take in people from the islands. About 2,000 of its population already live there.

But Australia, the other major economy in the region, had only given vague commitments.

"Australia was very reluctant to make a commitment even though they have been approached in a diplomatic way."