

Press release: Rory Stewart comments on IDC report into use of UK aid to tackle climate change

Commenting on the publication of the Commons International Development Committee's report on the use of UK aid to combat climate change, Secretary of State for International Development, Rory Stewart, said:

We are facing a climate cataclysm. One million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. We need to take radical steps or we – and our planet – will face an irreversible catastrophe.

The ice shelf is shrinking, oceans are rising and global carbon emissions are increasing. This is before we even count the cost on humans.

This report by the International Development Committee published today makes for sobering reading. We need new ways of working and a new direction. We need a wholesale change.

As International Development Secretary, I want to put climate and the environment at the heart of what this government does to protect our planet for future generations. I would argue spending 0.7 per cent of our gross national income on aid makes a difference, not just to the developing world, but to the UK as well.

I want to see more of UK aid budget spent on the environment, particularly on research and development. As climate extremes worsen, it is the world's poorest countries and communities which will be most affected, but this is a global issue. The aid budget should be spent on British research that could cut emissions in the world's biggest polluters, including China and India, to help.

Tackling climate change is not only the right thing to do. It is a very smart thing to do.

We all breathe the same air as people in China and India and tackling issues like climate change matters to us all. The UK cannot solve such problems alone.