

Top scientist takes new tack on global warming , Mon., January 21, 2008 Shvat 14, 5768

By [Zafir Rinat](#)

One of the world's most influential environmental scientists is set to present a controversial argument here today against the focus on reducing greenhouse gases and favoring R&D and better planning for the results of global warming such as hurricanes.

Professor Bjorn Lomborg argues that funds should be invested in research and development that in a few decades will spawn technology to produce clean energy that all countries can use. Until then, the focus should be on improving readiness for possible disasters caused by global warming.

Lomborg is the keynote speaker at a special session on climate change at the eighth Herzliya conference on policy and strategy, which opens today at the Knesset.

Lomborg, who has been recognized by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, says that working toward reducing greenhouse gases also limits funding to needs such as improving welfare, health and the economy in developing countries.

Lomborg's views contradict government policy in most countries, as well as the opinions of scientific bodies and environmental organizations.

According to Lomborg, who arrived in Israel over the weekend, there is no doubt that global warming caused by humans is taking place. But there are exaggerations, he says.

"One of the most outstanding examples of these exaggerations is the rise in sea level," Lomborg told Haaretz. "Nobel laureate Al Gore talks about a rise of six meters, but the United Nations team of scientists on climate change says that it is only a matter of a few dozen centimeters, and that is a significant difference."

Lomborg cites the possible extinction of the polar bear due to the melting of the ice caps. "The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol [to reduce greenhouse gases] will save a few bears a year," Lomborg says. "If we stop hunting the bears we will save nearly 300."

Regarding concerns over increased hurricane activity, he says that "experience shows that damage and loss can be prevented mainly by proper planning of construction and drainage" in threatened areas.

"If it's going to be that much hotter, then people should have more air conditioning and cooling of urban areas by plants and water features," he says. Lomborg adds that in the future more people will die of the heat, but fewer will die of the cold.

Five years ago 42-year-old resident of Copenhagen wrote a best-selling book "The Skeptical Environmentalist" in which he challenged most accepted environmental theories.

A few years ago he established the Copenhagen Consensus Center to formulate priorities for investing in various areas of importance for human existence.