

# Climate Session Opens With Words of Warning

**G**ENEVA, July 8 (Reuters) — United Nations officials and scientists today urged governments to agree in the coming two weeks on tighter targets for limiting the emissions of the greenhouse gases that are blamed for global warming. The officials, speaking at the start of the United Nations' Climate Change Convention, also issued a strong affirmation of the notion that economic activity is the main cause of global warming, dismissing critics of that view as industry lobby groups.

group, which links 2,500 scientists around the globe, has shown that failure to act could bring more severe droughts and floods and more disease, in rich nations and poor.

The conference, which involves 150 countries, is to wrap up on July 18 and 19 with a meeting of environmental ministers. Industrial groups are challenging important aspects of a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that will be a main focus of the gathering.

In the report, issued at the end of last year, the panel said there was strong evidence that global warming was the result of industrial activity, primarily the use of fossil fuels like oil and coal. That argument is the basis for the effort being led by the United Nations to reduce emissions.

But in a statement issued in Geneva today, the Global Climate Coalition, a group based in Washington that includes some of the most powerful companies in the United States, said it was too early to determine what causes warming. The coalition, which is also fighting United States backing for the convention, said lower emission targets could bind the United States "to economic and regulatory obligation that could have serious impacts on American industry and its job holders for the next 40 years."

Michael Cutajar, the convention's executive secretary, said the coalition's campaign reflected "concern among certain industry groups about where their industries would end up" if strong action were taken against warming. He called the attack on the report "a defense of economic interests disguised as an attack on scientific credibility."

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## A clash continues over what causes global warming.

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The conference seeks to nail down new pledges by industrial powers to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide they pump into the atmosphere.

"We will be successful if we get agreement on further commitments that might be made in the process of controlling climate change," said the conference president, Chen Chimutengwende, Zimbabwe's environmental minister.

And Bert Bolin, a Swedish scientist and chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is playing a vital role in the discussions, renewed warnings of more world disasters and health problems if warming is not slowed.

He said at the opening session of the conference that analysis by his