we humans are its chief cause. Yet even now, few people fully understand the gravity of the threat, or its immediacy.

Ily I did not. It was only after I took a recent ing "eco tour" of vulnerable regions that I the true magnitude of the danger. I have alsidered global warming to be a matter of utsidered global warming to be a matter of utsecy. Now I believe we are on the verge of a ohe if we do not act.

Teek, in Antarctica, I saw extraordinarily dradscapes, rare and wonderful. It was the most berience of my life. Yet it was deeply disturb-UNITED NATIONS, New Yor Climate change is real, a ns are its chief cause. Yet ev people fully understand t

broke up, sea levels could rise by six meters. If the effect on the coastlines and cities: New tions. It may not happen for 100 years — or it appen in 10. We simply do not know. But when sis, it could occur quickly, almost overnight. vell, for I could see this world changing. The ice is melting, far faster than we think.

I ave heard how the famous Larsen ice shelf is and disappeared five years ago. A giant slab 7-kilometers long — the size of some small is — vanished in less than three weeks. What carsen effect" were to repeat itself on a vastly scale?

E Chilean research base on King George Islentists told me that the entire West Antarctic et is at risk. Like Larsen, it is a continuous of floating ice, comprising nearly one-fifth of continuous one-fifth of

this is science, not science-fiction.

Dr. Gino Casassa, a leading Chilean glaciologist to with the Chilean Center for Scientific Studies and a tomesher of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Parle that recently shared a Nobel Prize, worries particularly about the Antarctic Peninsula — a finger of land on the northern coast that he designates as one of three global "hot spots," along with Central Asia and Greenland.

Temperatures there are rising 10 times faster than the global average, he has found Glaciers are visibly retreating. Grasses are taking root in Antarctica's barren soil, including one used on American golf courses. In the summer, it rains rather than snows increasingly often. A decade ago, Dr. Casassa was a skeptic on climate change.

Today, he fears a calamity.

I am not scare-mongering. But I believe we are nearing a tipping point. These are signs. I saw them everywhere I visited.

In Chile, researchers told me that roughly half of the 120 glaciers they monitor are shrinking, at rates twice as fast as a decade or two ago. These include the glaciers in the mountains outside the capital, Santiago, that provide fresh water for six million residents. To the noutry's mining industry a mainstance of the Andes are also melting faster than we think. I flew over Grey glacier, a virtual ice sea framed by towering appine peaks. In 1985, it retreated a full three kilometters in little more than two weeks. Yet another demonstration of the abrupt, unpredictable and potentially devastating Larsen effect.

I spent a day in perhaps the count for fine and potentially devastating Larsen effect.

I ended my travels under a great Samaumeira tree on the island of Combu, not far from Belem in the abrupt, unpredictable and potentially devastating Larsen effect.

I ended my travels under a great Samaumeira tree on the island of Combu, not far from Belem of the abrupt, unpredictable and potentially each own timerary had to be changed at the last moment an estimated 21 percent of global carbon emissions.

Scientists say

on in Antarctica

lent.

Brazil immensely heartened. Largely unno the rest of the world, Brazil has transformed to a quiet green giant — a leader in the fight global warming. Over the past two years, is deforestation in the Amazon by half. Vast jungle have been placed under federal protein Brasilia, President Luis Inácio Lula da sured me that the Amazon and its immense chest of biodiversity was the common he mankind and would be preserved. Brazil I world in renewable energy. It is one of only itons to successfully produce biofuels on scale. Yes, controversy surrounds the prografear that land currently used to grow fooc converted to fuel. Others worry that forest cut to make way for biomass plantations.

It is up to governments to balance social chenefits. But the important point is that Braing, its efforts to combat global warming a watching, as lessons for us all.

For too long, we have underestimated the of climate change. It is time to wake up. Las the UN Environment Program released its G port, calling for "drastic steps" in the face of climate change. It is sobering reading.

Yet its conclusions are encouraging. To the UN Environment of the Intergovernmental. Climate Change. It is sobering reading.

Yet its conclusions are encouraging. There are affordable ways to deal with climate change A report last week from the Internationa Agency was also cautiously upbeat. Global en mand is rising more quickly than most estim mand is rising more quickly than most estim gest — increasing 57 percent by 2030, acce IEA projections. But the amount of power B by renewable sources, excluding hydroelect pected to grow five-fold or more. As we see daily in the financial news, global business "green" in a big way.

All this sets the stage for the critical UN Change Summit in Bali two weeks from need a break-through: an agreement to law out an achievable agenda electical.