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## Hot Topics

### China announces targets on carbon dioxide emission cuts

The State Council announced on November 26 that China is going to reduce the intensity of carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent compared with the level of 2005.

This is "a voluntary action" taken by the Chinese government "based on our own national conditions" and "is a major contribution to the global effort in tackling climate change," the State Council said.

In a meeting presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao on November 25, the State Council reviewed a national task plan addressing climate change.

A press statement released on November 26 said the index of carbon dioxide emissions cuts, announced for the first time by China, would be "a binding goal" to be incorporated into China's medium and long-term national social and economic development plans.

New measures would be formulated to audit, monitor and assess its implementation, said the statement.

"In 2020, the country's GDP will at least double that of now, so will the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). But the required reduction of emissions intensity by 40 to 45 percent in 2020 compared with the level of 2005 means the emissions of GHG in 2020 has to be roughly the same as emissions now," said Qi Jianguo, an economic and environmental policy researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

The government would devote major efforts to developing renewable and nuclear energies to ensure the consumption of non-fossil-fuel power accounted for 15 percent of the country's total primary energy consumption by 2020, said the State Council statement.

More trees would be planted and the country's forest area would increase by 40 million hectares and forest volume by 1.3 billion cubic meters from the levels of 2005.

The State Council said that as a responsible developing nation, China advocated global concerted efforts in addressing climate change "through pragmatic and effective international cooperation."

The Chinese cabinet reiterated the principled stand for implementation of the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol.

Both the UNFCCC principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and the Bali Roadmap should be observed, the State Council said.

The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol should be carried out in a comprehensive, effective and lasting way, and emissions alleviation, adaptation, technological transfer and financial support should be coordinated in a comprehensive way to help bring about positive results for the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in December in Copenhagen, the State Council said.

"Appropriate handling of the climate change issue is of vital interest to China's social and economic development and people's fundamental interests, as well as the welfare of all the people in the world and the world's long-term development," the State Council said in the statement.

China faced mounting pressure and difficulties in developing its national economy and improving people's living standards as the country's industrialization and urbanization accelerated, said the statement.

Given the country's huge population, prominent economic structural problems, coal-dominated energy consumption structure, and increasing demand for energy, the government needed to make strenuous efforts to realize those targets, said the statement.

The government was required to take into account both immediate and long-term interests while achieving coordinated development of its economy and the cause of environmental protection, said the statement.

Coping with climate change should be a major strategy for the national economic and social development, said the statement.

More funding would be invested into the research, development and industrialization of technologies for energy saving, and into energy efficiency, clean coal development, renewable energies, advanced nuclear energies, and carbon capture and storage.

Laws, regulations and standards would be formulated and fiscal, taxation, pricing and financial measures would be introduced to manage and monitor the implementation of those laws and regulations, said the statement.

The State Council also said China would expand cooperation with foreign countries in raising its capacity to cope with climate change and import low-carbon and environment-friendly technologies.

The State Council also advocated greater public awareness in addressing global climate change and encouraged low-carbon lifestyles and consumption.

The Kyoto Protocol, which aimed to pool world efforts to combat global warming, has been ratified by 184 parties to the UNFCCC since 1997, but it has not been ratified by the United States.

Under the Protocol, developed countries are required to set clear targets for emissions reductions. The European Union, Canada, Japan and Australia, among other developed members, all set respective targets.

Developing countries such as China and India do not need to present any emissions targets.

## **China vows intensified efforts in tackling climate change next year**

China pledged on November 27 to "actively" deal with climate change next year by implementing measures to cut its carbon intensity and improve energy efficiency.

The plan was agreed at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, chaired by President Hu Jintao, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. The conference studied guidelines for the country's economic work in 2010.

The country would step up construction of major projects related to energy conservation and environmental protection in 2010, according to a statement released after the meeting.

More support in terms of investment should be given to promote energy saving and emissions reduction, the statement said.

The meeting came a day after China's State Council, the Cabinet, announced the country aimed to cut the amount of carbon dioxide it emitted per unit of gross domestic product by 40 to 45 percent from 2005 levels by 2020.

Despite pressures and difficulties, China would adhere to the targets, Xie Zhenhua, Vice Minister in Charge of the National Development and Reform Commission, told a press conference on November 26.

The difficulties referred to the country's large population, relatively low economic development level and the fact the country is at a critical period to accelerate industrialization and urbanization.

## **China to remove outdated industry**

China is planning "rare" and "heavy-handed" steps to phase out outdated industry, state media said on December 2, days after Beijing pledged to slow the growth in its fast-rising carbon emissions.

The government is to launch a "rare nationwide campaign" to eliminate inefficient and excess industrial capacity. It will include austerity measures that will be imposed on heavily polluting sectors including coal, steel, cement, printing, and dyeing.

The move came after China -- the world's top source of greenhouse gases -- last week unveiled the emissions-curbing proposal it will take to next week's UN climate change summit in Copenhagen.

However, it also appears to be part of a drive launched this year by authorities to rein in excess capacity amid fears that a government economic stimulus package has fuelled over-investment in some industrial sectors.

Key measures listed include halting the supply of land needed for the expansion of outdated capacity and equipment, curbing demand for high-emission products, and strictly limiting exports.

Faithfulness in carrying out the campaign will be a key factor in assessing the overall work performance of local-level officials.

Individual companies that fail to comply will face penalties such as denial or revocation of required licenses and a cut-off of electricity supplies.

Authorities including the National Development and Reform Commission -- the top economic planning agency -- the Ministry of Environment Protection and the central bank will jointly implement the policy.