

Climate goal is supported by China and India

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China and India formally agreed Tuesday to join the international climate change agreement reached in December in Copenhagen, the last two major economies to sign up.

The two countries, among the largest and fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the world, submitted letters to the United Nations agreeing to be included on a list of countries covered by the Copenhagen Accord, a three-page nonbinding statement reached at the end of the contentious and chaotic 10-day conference.

China and India join more than 100 countries that have signed up under the accord, which calls for limiting the rise in global temperatures to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, or 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit, beyond pre-industrial levels.

The agreement also calls for spending as much as \$100 billion a year to help emerging countries adapt to climate change and develop low-carbon energy systems, to bring energy technology more quickly to the developing world and to take steps to protect tropical forests from destruction.

The 192 nations gathered at the Copenhagen climate meeting did not formally adopt the accord, but merely voted to "take note" of it. The inclusion of China and India has only a minor practical effect but will provide a boost for the agreement's credibility.

"After careful consideration, India has agreed to such a listing," Reuters quoted India's environment minister, Jairam Ramesh, as telling Parliament on Tuesday. "We believe that our decision to be listed reflects the role India played in giving shape to the Copenhagen Accord. This will strengthen our negotiating position on climate change."

Mr. Ramesh confirmed India's action in an e-mail message.

India sent a letter on Monday to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the body responsible for international climate negotiations, stating its intent to join the Copenhagen Accord.

China's chief climate change negotiator, Su Wei, submitted a single-sentence letter saying that the United Nations "can proceed to include China in the list of parties" signed up under the accord.

Todd Stern, who leads the American climate change negotiating team, said he was pleased to see China and India sign on. "The accord is a significant step forward, including important provisions on mitigation, funding, transparency, technology, forests and adaptation," Mr. Stern said by e-mail.

Analysts who have studied the pledges find that they fall short of the overall goal of the agreement, but would make a substantial dent in the greenhouse gas emissions that are heating the planet.

China has said it will try to voluntarily reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide per unit of economic growth — a measure known as "carbon intensity" — by 40 to 45 percent by 2020, compared with 2005 levels. India set a domestic emissions intensity reduction target of 20 to 25 percent by 2020, compared with 2005 levels, excluding its agricultural sector.

The United States pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 17 percent by 2020 compared with 2005, contingent on Congress's enacting climate change and energy legislation.

Negotiators are trying to write an enforceable global climate change treaty, but there is little expectation that such an agreement will be reached this year.

The European Union's climate commissioner, Connie Hedegaard of Denmark, said Tuesday that nations should now aim to reach an agreement in 2011 at a United Nations conference in South Africa, rather than this year in Mexico.

Fonte: New York Times, New York, Mar. 9th 2010, Enviroment, online.

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