

China's emissions-cut pledge unverifiable (UPI)

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China's efforts to reduce its carbon emissions aren't binding and won't be subject to international verification, Chinese officials said.

Climate change specialists said a key to success at the two-week U.N.-sponsored climate change summit that began Monday in Copenhagen, Denmark, would be whether China, the United States, India and the European Union could strike an accord to reduce their combined carbon emissions, The Washington Times reported Monday.

Observers said they expect negotiations would lead to individual countries pledging to lower carbon emissions and an agreement to keep discussions open in 2010.

China, the world's biggest carbon emitter, will be responsible for about 29 percent of total global emissions by 2030, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said.

China announced Nov. 26 it would cut carbon emissions per unit of its gross domestic product by between 40 percent and 45 percent by 2020, compared with 2005 levels.

Xie Zhenhua, vice director of the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top planning body, said the country's carbon-intensity goals would be subject to an as-yet unspecified domestic accountability systems, and wouldn't be internationally binding or subject to foreign international scrutiny, the Times said.

China will "reduce the speed of our emissions rise," but still needs to balance environmental and economic factors, Xie said.

India announced last week a goal of reducing emissions by 20 percent to 25 percent from 2005 to 2020, which also would be tied to the country's gross domestic product.

A PricewaterhouseCoopers report released Dec. 1 indicated the United States, the European Union, China and India would account for 63 percent of global carbon emissions between 2000 and 2050.