

China's 12th Five Year Plan makes it on track to meet Cancun pledges

Panama City – Tuesday 4 October 2011 - China is on track to meet – or even surpass – some of its Cancun climate pledges, yet its emissions will rise higher than expected, according to the latest Climate Action Tracker (1), released today at the Panama climate negotiations.

The update includes an analysis of China's 12th Five Year Plan, announced in March this year, and measured it against China's climate pledge from Cancun (2).

It has also calculated the cost of the US delaying action – and analysed Brazil's new numbers announced in April.

“The overall picture shows us that a higher than expected economic growth rate brings with it higher emissions – and the sooner the switch is made to cleaner energy sources, the better, in order to avoid locking in climate-damaging energy,” said Bill Hare of Climate Analytics.

“It also illustrates the risks and uncertainties of using business as usual scenarios as the basis for emission reduction pledges.”

The main findings on China are:

- China is set to surpass its Cancun Agreement pledge of 40-45% reduction in emissions per unit of GDP by 2020 (from 2005 levels), by rapidly reducing its energy intensity and introducing renewable energy and other non-fossil energy sources.
- These targets constitute a major effort and the non-fossil target leads to emissions dropping by around 580 to 800 Mt CO₂ (or 6-8%) below business as usual in 2020.
- Yet faster than expected economic growth means that emissions in 2020 are likely to be higher than previous estimates - by about 1 gigatonne of CO₂ equivalent a year.

Meanwhile, the absence so far of substantial US action to meet its Copenhagen pledge of a 17% emissions reduction by 2020 (at 2005 levels) will prove more expensive with every year of delay. If the US doesn't start acting until 2015, it will need to reduce emissions at a rate of 3% a year. If substantial action had begun in 2010 immediately after Copenhagen, it would only have needed to reduce emissions at a rate of 1.3% a year – a large difference in costs.

“It is becoming so much clearer that while China has achieved a lot, it still has a way to go as its GDP continues to rise fast. And the longer the US delays action, the more it will cost to meet its target,” said Niklas Höhne, of Ecofys.

CAT also analysed Brazil's new business as usual scenario that forms the baseline for its 36% to 39% reduction target. Brazil's new baseline is 18% higher than before - a difference of over 0.5 GtCO₂ (+18%) for 2020 BAU emissions.

“The range of uncertainties put up in these different pledges point clearly to one thing: there is an urgent need for a clear system of monitoring and reporting,” said Hare.

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The Climate Action Tracker press conference in Panama will be live webcast on the UNFCCC website (and can be viewed afterward)

See the webcast here <http://bit.ly/nBh1nJ>

Or watch it on Demand afterward <http://bit.ly/rev6hY>

(1) Climate Action Tracker is a joint project between Climate Analytics, Ecofys and the Pk Potsdam Institute.

(2) In April, the Climate Action Tracker rated both the China and US targets as “inadequate” and Brazil as “medium”.