



China says its emissions will keep rising until its per capita GDP is around five times its current rate, further dampening hopes that the world's largest polluter will agree in principle to ambitious binding emission reduction targets at this month's Doha Climate Change Summit.

Heading into the conference, Xie Zhenhua, China's chief negotiator, told state news agency Xinhua it would be unfair and unreasonable to expect the country to make absolute cuts in emissions when its per capita GDP stands at \$5,000.

He said emissions peaked in Western countries when their per capita GDP was between \$40,000 and \$50,000 and China's were still climbing towards that point.

However, Xie forecast China's emissions would be likely to peak when its per capita GDP had reached about half of the industrialised world's \$40,000 to \$50,000 mark, before stabilising and then starting to fall.

The news comes as the World Bank, the UN and IEA all warned countries to up their emission reduction measures or risk being locked in to a pathway towards dangerous levels of climate change.

Xie went on to say a low-carbon pathway was the only choice for China and the world, adding that countries that seize the opportunity to develop green technologies would gain an edge in what is likely to be a fiercely competitive market.

To that end, China is reportedly investing over \$7bn to install 3GW of solar thermal capacity by 2015 as part of plans to cut the country's carbon intensity outlined in its latest five-year plan.

Beijing last year adopted targets to decrease energy consumption per unit of GDP by 16 per cent, reduce CO₂ emissions per unit of GDP by 17 per cent, and raise the proportion of non-fossil fuels in the overall primary energy mix to 11.4 per cent.

The administration insists it is making good progress against its new targets: a report produced by the Chinese government says the country's carbon intensity has dropped more than 19 per cent since 2005, equivalent to just under 1.5 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions and in line with the goals set by the previous five-year plan.

However, Xie reiterated the call made by China, Brazil, India and South Africa this week for developed countries to increase their emissions reduction promises as part of an extension of the Kyoto Protocol, the deal that underpins international carbon cutting efforts.

The original Kyoto deal expires at the end of this year and diplomats are hoping to negotiate an extension of the agreement at next week's Doha Summit. The EU and Australia have said they are ready to sign up to an extension, but the US and many other industrialised countries are arguing that they will only sign up to a new binding emissions reduction treaty if it imposes targets on large emerging economies, such as China and India.

Xie said China will keep an open mind in the upcoming talks, but remains insistent that the Kyoto Protocol's principles of "common but differentiated responsibilities" are incorporated in any new agreement.

He also vowed that Beijing would continue to push forward its environmental policies, even without a successful outcome at the latest round of talks.

"We hope the Doha conference, like the one in Durban [last year], will reach a comprehensive and balanced result," he said.

"No matter the negotiation result [in Doha], China will take more active measures domestically."