

Aggressive climate pact needed to check rising greenhouse gas emissions: Researchers

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London: The world needs an aggressive climate policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to two degrees, says an analysis of the emission targets from 159 countries.

Developing countries, including India, have recently joined in the effort to slow down climate change by setting targets for reducing their emissions.

However, despite the now-stated targets, emissions will continue to increase up to 2030 and global temperature increase can be kept below the critical two degree limit only if drastic emission reductions are carried out after 2030, warn the researchers from VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland.

"The rate of emission reductions required after 2030 might not be realistic anymore and, therefore, it is critically important to make the current emission targets for 2030 more ambitious," said senior scientist Tommi Ekholm.

VTT studied the emission reduction targets from 159 countries (131 countries and the EU) to investigate how large a reduction or increase in emissions is implied by each country's stated target.

Of the large countries in 2030, six would produce more than 10 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person: Russia (18 tonnes), Australia (13.7 tonnes), China (13.1 tonnes), Canada (12.9 tonnes), the US (12.8 tonnes) and South Korea (10.8 tonnes).

Of the high-emitting countries, the one with the most room for improvement is China, whose emissions would reach 13.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person by 2030 - an increase of roughly 65 percent compared to the 2010 level.

At the same time, the emissions of the US would decrease by approximately one third to 12.8 tonnes per person.

At that time, the total emissions of China would be almost four times as large as those of the US.

With the current targets, the EU's emissions per person would decrease by one third to 5.9 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

The fourth largest emitter is India whose emissions per person would double to 4.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

"Based on this, the negotiations in the Paris Climate Conference present an opportunity to achieve a comprehensive agreement on reducing emissions on a global scale," Ekholm stated.

The findings show that all developed countries have promised to reduce emissions by 20-30 percent from the current level. In contrast, the targets of developing countries vary considerably.

"Some of the developing countries aim at emissions reductions or a small increase at most, whereas the target of some countries would lead to a tripling of emissions from the current level," noted Ekholm.

The results provide an important basis for discussion for the Paris Climate Conference which aims to draw up a global climate agreement applying to 196 countries that will enter into force in 2020.

VTT is set to present the results of the study in a side-event on 10 December in connection with the Paris Climate

Conference.

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