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**INDIA**

## Seeking Aid For Low Carbon Growth

By Keya Acharya

**BANGALORE, India , Dec 10, 2011 (IPS) - After pushing for financing adaptation at the just-concluded United Nations climate talks at Durban, India is hitting every button for aid in executing its low-carbon growth plans.**

This despite India (and China) refusing to sign new climate agreements at the U.N. Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s 17th conference of the parties (COP 17) in the South African city.

India, in fact, has a well-drawn out policy and action plan for climate change. Last year it announced reduction of emissions by 20-25 percent by 2020 and its national policies on abatement of climate change will help significantly towards reducing global warming.

In 2008, India brought out a National Action Plan on Climate Change, dealing with initiatives in eight key areas till 2017: solar and energy efficiency; sustainable habitat; sustainable agriculture; water; Himalayan ecosystem; Green India and strategic knowledge on climate change.

India, which has been looking for funds under the UNFCCC's Green Climate Fund, is now also interested in the World Bank's Clean Technology Fund (CTF).

Started by the World Bank in 2008-09 along with major regional banks, the CTF has a total of 6.1 billion dollars in public finance and had loaned 4.35 billion dollars to 12 countries by March 2010.

Low-carbon growth options in industry, research institutions and governance have been initiated in fields varying from removal of hydro-fluorocarbons and chlorofluorocarbons in manufacturing processes to conservation of biodiversity in the forestry sector.

"There is a lot of involvement by industry in areas such as the carbon market and renewable energy," says Rita Roy Choudhury, director of environment, climate change and renewable energy at the Delhi-based Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

FICCI has a continuing collaboration with the government on climate change and environmental policies for industry.

"In terms of overall sustainability though, Indian industry is still at 'awareness level'," Choudhary commented to IPS over telephone from Delhi.

FICCI had put forward to its government, at COP 17 in Durban, requests for fast transfer of technologies, finance and protection of intellectual property rights.

India's low-carbon growth strategies are now slated for inclusion in its 12th five-year plan beginning 2012.

A tax on coal consumption at Indian rupees 50 (approximately one dollar) per metric tonne of coal, proposed by the environment ministry in 2010, has overcome resistance from the industrial sector and garnered a reported 555 million dollars in 2011 which is to be used for financing electricity transmission from clean energy projects to poor states.

Another major effort underway is India's Jawaharlal Nehru Solar Mission to produce 20,000 megawatts of power with 20 million solar collectors and 20 million lighting systems by 2022.

Though its target looks unattainable, the project is moving ahead with 8.50 Mw, out of a targeted 200 Mw of solar power for 2011, becoming operational by August 2011.

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In November 2011, the CTF cleared 775 million dollars for a super-efficient equipment programme initiative that encourages energy efficiency among consumers and industry.

The funds will also help the government's solar mission by lowering the cost of financing, facilitating technology and hydropower development.



"Our goal is to invest in projects that impact social and economic development with significant co-benefits for climate change," says Anuradha Thakur, CTF Trust Fund member, in a press release.

In yet another private financial agreement - that belies India's national climate policy stance against the United States' refusal to sign up, or continuance of the Kyoto Protocol - the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) approved 150 million dollars in September 2011 towards financing solar energy.

The New Delhi-based firm Applied Solar Technologies will use the money to supplement the diesel used in telecommunication tower generators with solar photovoltaics.

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"This project brings OPIC's financing for renewable energy in India to more than 400 million dollars approved in just the past year," says OPIC chief Elizabeth Littlefield on the official website of the U.S. embassy in India.

"OPIC is proud to be supporting India's impressive ambitions to shift to a less carbon-intensive economy."

India also has an ambitious eco-restoration programme, under its Green India Mission, to develop 20 million hectares of land in the next 10 years, calculated to sequester 43 million tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

India is also seeking global funding to aid its forestry conservation efforts, mainly through additional steps for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation or REDD +.

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