

# India, China stay out; EU, 27 nations vow to cut pollution

## Developmental Needs Behind Stand, Say Two Asian Nations

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### Katowice (Poland):

Seeking to end the deadlock on critical issues, the European Union (EU) and 27 countries have decided to raise emission reduction targets by 2020. In answer to environmentalists who wanted current big polluters like China and India to do the same, the two countries have cited their lower per capita emission and huge developmental needs.

As crucial negotiations to finalise the rule book for Paris Agreement entered the final round, India and other developing countries want the rich ones (historical polluters) to meet their pre-2020 targets so that “no undue burden is shifted to post-2020 period”.

A recent IPCC special report on the impact of 1.5 degree Celsius of warming across the globe has galvanised the EU and 27 countries, including a few developing ones, to come together as a ‘High Ambition Coalition’ (HAC) and decide to raise their Paris Agreement targets. Though these countries are not formally required to increase their targets until 2025, they will now raise their targets substantially under the HAC by 2020.

The move is seen as an attempt to send a positive signal at the UN climate conference (COP24) where the lack of cooperation shown by four fossil-fuel powers — USA, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait — have demoralised other participants, leading to slow progress in talks on other entirely unrelated issues.

Big developing countries and high current emitters like China and India are not part of the HAC, even as civil society representatives pushed hard for an outcome to

COP24 requiring all countries to raise their emission reduction ambition by 2020 keeping in view the latest IPCC report.

“Like the European coalition, emerging economies like the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) countries should also announce their intention to increase their ambition before 2020. This will boost the global collective action. It’ll also give a signal to climate laggards like the US and Saudi Arabia that despite their obstructions, the world will move ahead to combat climate change,” said Chandra Bhushan, climate change expert of the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

Senior bureaucrat and India’s head of delegation at COP24, A K Mehta, while delivering India’s country statement on Wednesday, again reminded the gathering that the country’s per capita emissions continued to be much less than many countries. He said, “India is guided by its own values and belief in sustainable lifestyles which respect nature, evident from the fact that our share in cumulative historical global GHG emissions is only about 3% and our per capita emissions are just about one-third of the global average.”

The CSE and several civil society groups have, however, long been saying that India is already doing far better than what it had pledged and therefore the country can raise its ambition and show leadership on climate issues.

