

Climate deal unlikely at Cancun

Developed countries need to do more, says China

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BEIJING: As the last round of negotiations before the year-end Cancun climate conference begins on Monday in Tianjin, a port city near here, Chinese officials played down the chances of a binding climate deal being reached this year, citing persisting differences between developed and developing countries.

China's top climate official Xie Zhenhua said this week developed countries needed "to do more and do better" to take on greater emission cuts, if a binding deal was to be reached. "To push forward negotiations, all countries should take a more flexible

attitude on key issues and make some compromises to achieve an outcome which might not satisfy everybody, but can be acceptable for all," said Mr. Xie, who is also the vice-chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). "That will be our final agreement."

Commitments to reduce emissions from developed countries — most importantly, from the United States, where climate legislation has been stalled in Congress — is seen by Chinese officials, as well as their Indian counterparts, as one of three main sticking points in the on-going negotiations. Another crucial issue heading into the

next round of talks is the question of financial support and aid from developed countries for climate projects in developing countries.

Demands from the West for Measurement, Reporting and Verification of emissions reduction projects in developing countries are another point of difference.

The negotiations in Tianjin would help narrow these differences and "establish the groundwork" ahead of the November 29 Cancun conference, said Mr. Xie. A binding deal at the conference was unlikely, but China remained hopeful of reaching a deal in South Africa in 2011.

"We already have a proposal on the table for long-term cooperative action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change," he said. "All coun-

tries will try to eliminate divergence as much as possible in Tianjin."

China, along with India, Brazil and South Africa, will play a key role in this week's talks in representing the interests of developing nations. Negotiators from more than 190 parties will attend the six-day talks in Tianjin. Between October 4 and 9, two working groups will meet to discuss two draft documents — a 70-page negotiating text for Cancun, as well as a draft proposal under the Kyoto Protocol.

India's Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh is scheduled to arrive here on October 10, and will meet with Mr. Xie and other Ministers after the negotiations conclude.

The negotiations in Tianjin mark the first instance of Chi-

na hosting high-level climate negotiations — an indicator, according to some analysts, of the country's growing influence on the climate debate.

China has committed to reducing the carbon intensity of its emissions, or emissions per unit of GDP, by 40 per cent of 2005 levels by 2020.

But as the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, developed nations say China should take on greater commitments.

Mr. Xie, however, said China had "already paid a high price" in taking on its current targets. "As a developing country, China faces more challenges than developed nations to control greenhouse gas emissions, since China has to boost economic growth, improve livelihoods and protect the environment at the same time," he said.